The Secret of SANCTITY REVEALED.

DE MONTFORT

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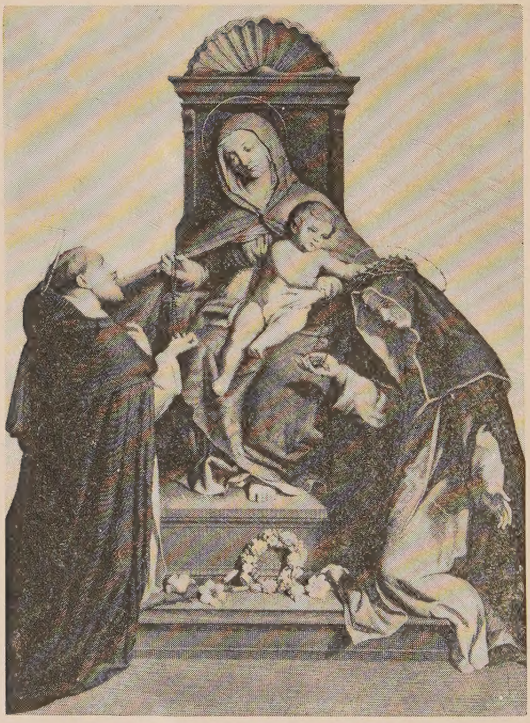

THE

Secret of Sanctity Revealed in Mary.

— ABRIDGED FROM —

"TRUE DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN,"

OF

BLESSED GRIGNON DE MONTFORT, of the Third Order of St. Dominic.

BY

A DOMINICAN FATHER.

"Mary is a holy place and the Holy of Holies, where saints are formed and moulded. * * * Console yourselves and exult in having the secret which I teach you; a secret unknown to almost all Christians, even the most devout."—DE MONTFORT.

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NOTICE.

"*The writings of De Montfort are in the same category as the works of St. Alphonsus, which no one may condemn as unsound.*"

HERBERT,

Bishop of Salford.

PREFACE.

LATELY the Church raised to her altars one of the most remarkable men of the eighteenth century. Blessed Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort died in 1716. Though called when only forty-three years of age to his reward, few men accomplished such wonderful works for God and for souls as he accomplished. His life and writings are little known in America; his principal work, "True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin," being in the hands of only a few devout souls. Yet all who have studied that book, which is truly a "Hidden Treasure," will readily confess that those who reduce his teachings to practice will soon attain not only solid, but even eminent, sanctity. "Those who take him for their master," says Father Faber, "will hardly be able to name a saint, or ascetic writer, to whose grace and spirit their minds will be more subject than to his. He was at once persecuted and venerated. His amount of work, like that of St.

Anthony of Padua, is incredible, and indeed inexplicable. He comes, like another St. Vincent Ferrer, as if in the days bordering on the Last Judgment, and proclaims that he brings authentic message from God about the greater honor and wider knowledge and more prominent love of his blessed Mother and her connection with the Second Advent of her Son."

In preparing for the press these pages, containing the substance of De Montfort's teachings on the Blessed Virgin, the compiler desires to popularize what he, with others, considers in very deed the true devotion to our Immaculate Mother. He feels that society demands the spread of this devotion; that the spirit of the Church, the encyclicals of the Holy Father, call for greater love of Mary.

All conversant with the state of society must acknowledge its moral declension; immorality, error, heresy, and infidelity are advancing apace. The Church must throw herself on the bosom of Mary. Mary must bring back devotion to the world even as she brought the Sun of Justice on benighted paganism. "The knowledge and love of the infinite and invisible God," says Father de Concilio, "have passed away from the modern world. And

what is to bring them back? who is to make God visible again to man and to society, to save society from that abyss to which it is hastening with giant step? . . . who is to regenerate the individual, the family, the state? In great part the same magnificent personality who once made God visible — the glorious Mother of God. *Mary has to save man and society to-day as she did the heathen world.* . . . Mary must bring Jesus to every soul that has Him not — to the individual, to the family, to society." Mary must be preached to the nations even as the Gospel of Jesus was preached to to the world. "The world must know her sublime dignity, her grand agency in the mystery of our redemption, . . . her part in the salvation of every one of us."*

"The sanctification of the soul," says the Bishop of Salford, "is more dependent on our Blessed Lady's continuous care and maternal love than upon the influence of any other creature. As the Incarnation of God depended on her good will and consent, so the elevation of man to a state of eternal beatitude depends upon her assistance. Mary is no less necessary to the redeemed than she was to the Redeemer. And theology says she

*Italicized by compiler.

was necessary to him by a necessity called Hypothetical."

"Constituted as we are, guides of men along the rugged path of life, we are doubly bound to make a special study of Mary's place in the work of man's sanctification. It is not enough," he says, "to recognize her singular prerogatives, we must proclaim and explain them until men know her, love her, and fly to her as the *Felix cœli porta*."

Alas! that it is so hard to make men realize the truth of the good Bishop's teachings, with regard to the importance of Mary's part in the work of our sanctification. "She is the mould into which we must cast ourselves in order to be moulded after the image of her Adorable Son." And it is only by a faithful following of De Montfort's heaven-inspired doctrine that we can hope to arrive at that sublime sanctity of which he speaks. True, the sacrifices he asks are great; true, self-love is laid bare and pursued to its last hiding place; true, the abandonment, the renunciation he demands are greater than are demanded in the most strict religious order of the Church. But, on the other hand, what peace of soul; what fortitude in trials; what liberty of spirit; what freedom from illusions of the enemy; and,

above all, what wonderful guidance and protection do not those true sons and daughters of Mary receive from their good Mother, who, in return for their generous consecration of all to her, makes her merits their own; guards them from being robbed by the enemy, and stripped of their good works through the spirit of pride and self-reliance.

Let us hasten to propagate this devotion of De Montfort — this true devotion to the Mother of Jesus, and thereby help to save and sanctify our fellow-men.

"Thousands of souls perish," says Father Faber, "because Mary is withheld from them. It is the miserable unworthy shadow, which we call our devotion to the Blessed Virgin, that is the cause of all these wants and blights, these evils and omissions and declines. Yet, if we are to believe the revelations of the Saints, God is *pressing* for a greater, a wider, a stronger, quite another devotion to His Blessed Mother. I cannot think of a higher work or a broader vocation for any one than the simple spreading of this peculiar devotion of the Venerable Grignon de Montfort. Let a man but try it for himself, and his surprise at the graces it brings with it, and the transformations it causes in his soul, will soon convince him of

its otherwise almost incredible efficacy as a means for the salvation of men, and for the coming of the kingdom of Christ. Oh, if Mary were but known, there would be no coldness to Jesus then! Oh, if Mary were but known, how much more wonderful would be our faith, and how different would our Communions be! Oh, if Mary were but known, how much happier, how much holier, how much less worldly should we be, and how much more should we be living images of our sole Lord and Saviour, her dearest and most blessed Son."

You are earnestly asked, beloved reader, to accept this sublime vocation of which Faber speaks. The time has come for every one who desires peace for the Church, the conversion of all in sin and error, the reign of Jesus over individuals and over society, to labor to make Mary more known and more loved. Each one of her children can do something towards propagating this great devotion. You can speak of it to others. You can lend them this little book, or procure them a copy. You must be faithful yourself in the practice of all that De Montfort teaches. You must earnestly pray for the reign of Jesus and Mary. You must read this little pamphlet again and again.

Each time its teachings will become more clear and more sublime. You will thus hasten the "age of Mary," of which Faber so warmly speaks. This purpose seems to have been prominent in the mind of Pius the Ninth, and his present illustrious successor, Leo the Thirteenth, is equally devoted to it. The definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, and the numerous decrees and encyclicals issued by these great Pontiffs in favor of the Rosary, emphatically illustrate this point.

The compiler of these pages reserves no rights, seeks no profit from their diffusion, save the happiness of doing something for the reign of Mary over the hearts of men, in order that she may accomplish her divine mission of leading all to the feet of her adorable son Jesus Christ.

J. M. J. D.

March 25th, 1887.

INTRODUCTION.

It is by the most holy Virgin Mary that Jesus has come into the world, and it is also by her that He has to reign in the world.

Mary has been singularly hidden during her life. It is on this account that the Holy Ghost and the Church call her *alma Mater*,—*Mother secret and hidden.* Her humility was so profound that she had no inclination on earth more powerful or more constant than that of hiding herself, even from herself, as well as from every other creature, so as to be known to God only. He heard her prayers to Him, when she begged to be hidden, to be humbled, and to be treated as in all respects poor and of no account. He took pleasure in hiding her from all human creatures in her conception, in her birth, in her life, and in her resurrection and assumption.

God the Father consented that she should do no miracle, at least no public one, during her life, although He had given her the power. God the Son consented that she should hardly ever speak, though He had communicated His

wisdom to her. God the Holy Ghost, though she was His faithful Spouse, consented that His Apostles and Evangelists should speak but very little of her, and no more than was necessary to make Jesus Christ known.

I say with the Saints, The immaculate Mary is the terrestrial Paradise of the New Adam, where He is incarnate by the operation of the Holy Ghost, in order to work there incomprehensible marvels. She is the grand and spotless World of God, where there are beauties and treasures unspeakable. She is the magnificence of the Most High, where He has hidden, as in her bosom, His only Son, and in Him all that is most excellent and most precious. Oh, what grand and hidden things that mighty God has wrought in this admirable creature! How has she herself been compelled to say it, in spite of her profound humility: *Fecit mihi magna, qui potens est!*— "He that is mighty hath done great things to me." The world knows them not, because it is at once incapable and unworthy of such knowledge.

The Saints have said admirable things of this Holy City of God; and, as they themselves avow, they have never been more eloquent and more content than when they have spoken

of her. Yet, after all they have said, they cry out that the height of her merits, which she has raised up to the throne of the Divinity, cannot be fully seen; that the breadth of her charity, which is broader than the earth, is in truth immeasurable; that the grandeur of her power, which she exercises even over God Himself, is incomprehensible; and finally, that the depth of her humility, and of all her virtues and graces, is an abyss which never can be sounded.

O height incomprehensible! O breadth unspeakable! O grandeur immeasurable! O abyss impenetrable! Every day, from one end of the earth to the other, in the highest heights of the heavens and in the profoundest depths of the abysses, everything preaches, everything publishes, the admirable Mary! The nine choirs of Angels, men of all ages, sexes, conditions, and religions, good or bad, nay, even the devils themselves, willingly or unwillingly, are compelled, by the force of truth, to call her Blessed.

St. Michael, as St. Augustine says, although the prince of all the heavenly court, is the most zealous in honoring her and causing her to be honored, while he waits always in expectation that he may have the honor to go, at her

bidding, to render service to some one of her servants.

The whole earth is full of her glory, especially among Christians, amongst whom she is taken as the protectress of many kingdoms, provinces, dioceses, and cities. Numbers of cathedrals are consecrated to God under her name. There is not a church without an altar in her honor, not a country or a canton where there are not some miraculous images, where all sorts of evils are cured, and all sorts of good gifts obtained. Who can count the confraternities and congregations in her honor? How many religious orders have been founded in her name and under her protection! What numbers there are of Brothers and Sisters of all these confraternities, and of religious men and women of these orders, who publish her praises and confess her mercies! There is not a little child, who, as it lisps the Ave Maria, does not praise her. There is scarcely a sinner who, even in his obduracy, has not some spark of confidence in her. Nay, the very devils in hell respect her while they fear her.

After that we must surely say with the Saints, *De Maria nunquam satis*,— "Of Mary there is never enough;" we have not yet praised, exalted, honored, loved, and served Mary as we

ought to do. She has deserved still more praise, still more respect, still more love, and far more service.

After that we must say with the Holy Ghost, *Omnis gloria filiæ Regis ab intus*,—"All the glory of the King's daughter is within." It is as if all the outward glory, which heaven and earth rival each other in laying at her feet, is nothing in comparison with that which she receives within from the Creator, and which is not known by creatures, who in their littleness are unable to penetrate the secret of the secrets of the King.

If you wish to comprehend the Mother, says a Saint, comprehend the Son; for she is the worthy Mother of God. *Hic taceat omnis lingua*, —"Here let every tongue be mute."

It is with a particular joy that my heart has dictated what I have just written, in order to show that the immaculate Mary has been up to this time unknown, and that this is one of the reasons that Jesus Christ is not known as He should be known. If, then, as is certain, the kingdom of Jesus Christ is to come into the world, it will be but a necessary consequence of the knowledge of the kingdom of the most holy Virgin Mary, who brought Him into the world the first time, and will make His second advent full of splendor.

TRUE DEVOTION

TO

THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

PART I.

ON DEVOTION TO OUR BLESSED LADY IN GENERAL.

I. EXCELLENCE AND NECESSITY OF DEVOTION TO OUR BLESSED LADY.

I AVOW, with all the Church, that Mary, being but a mere creature that has come from the hands of the Most High, is, in comparison with His Infinite Majesty, less than an atom; or rather she is nothing at all, because He only is "He who is," and thus by consequence that grand Lord, always independent and sufficient to Himself, never had, and has not now, any absolute need of the Holy Virgin for the accomplishment of His will, and for the manifestation of His glory. He has but to will, in order to do everything. Nevertheless

I say that, things being supposed as they are now, God having willed to commence and to complete His greatest works by the most holy Virgin, since He created her, we may well think He will not change His conduct in the eternal ages; for He is God, and He changes not either in His sentiments or in His conduct.

God the Father has not given His Only-begotten to the world except by Mary. Whatever sighs the patriarchs may have sent forth,—whatever prayers the prophets and the saints of the ancient law may have offered up to obtain that treasure for full four thousand years,—it was but Mary that merited it; it was but Mary who found grace before God by the force of her prayers and the eminence of her virtues. The world was unworthy, says St. Augustine, to receive the Son of God immediately from the Father's hands. He has given Him to Mary in order that the world might receive Him through her. The Son of God has made Himself Man; but it was in Mary and by Mary. God the Holy Ghost has formed Jesus Christ in Mary; but it was only after having asked her consent by one of the first ministers of His court.

God the Father has communicated to Mary His fruitfulness, as far as a mere creature was

ST. ALBERT'S COLLEGE L

capable of it, in order that He might give her the power to produce His Son, and all the members of His mystical Body. God the Son has descended into her virginial womb, as the new Adam into the terrestrial paradise, to take His pleasure there, and to work in secret the marvels of His grace.

God made Man has found His liberty in seeing Himself imprisoned in her womb. He has made His Omnipotence shine forth in letting Himself be carried by that blessed Virgin. He has found His glory and His Father's in hiding His splendors from all creatures here below, and revealing them to Mary only. He has glorified His Independence and His Majesty, in depending on that sweet Virgin, in His Conception, in His Birth, in His Presentation in the Temple, in His Hidden Life of thirty years, and even in His Death, where she was to be present, in order that He might make with her but one same sacrifice, and be immolated to the Eternal Father by her consent; just as Isaac of old was offered by Abraham's consent to the Will of God. It is she who has suckled Him, nourished Him, supported Him, brought Him up, and then sacrificed Him for us.

O admirable and incomprehensible depend-

ence of a God, which the Holy Ghost could not pass in silence in the Gospel, although He has hidden from us nearly all the admirable things which that Incarnate Wisdom did in His Hidden Life, as if He would enable us, by His revelation of that at least, to understand something of its price! Jesus Christ gave more glory to God the Father by submission to His Mother during those thirty years than He would have given Him in converting the whole world by the working of the most stupendous miracles. Oh, how highly we glorify God, when, to please Him, we submit ourselves to Mary, after the example of Jesus Christ, our Sole Exemplar!

If we examine narrowly the rest of our Blessed Lord's Life, we shall see that it was His Will to begin His miracles by Mary. He sanctified St. John in the womb of St. Elizabeth, his mother; but it was by Mary's word. No sooner had she spoken than John was sanctified; and this was His first and greatest miracle of grace. At the marriage of Cana He changed the water into wine; but it was at Mary's humble prayer; and this was His first miracle of nature. He has begun and continued His miracles by Mary, and He will continue them to the end of ages by Mary also.

God the Holy Ghost being barren in God—that is to say, not producing another Divine Person—is become fruitful by Mary, whom He has espoused. It is with her, in her, and of her, that He has produced His Masterpiece, which is a God made Man, and whom He goes on producing in the persons of His members daily to the end of the world. The predestinate are the members of that Adorable Head. This is the reason why He, the Holy Ghost, the more He finds Mary, His dear and indissoluble Spouse, in any soul, becomes the more active and mighty in producing Jesus Christ in that soul, and that soul in Jesus Christ.

It is not that we may say that our Blessed Lady gives the Holy Ghost His fruitfulness, as if He had it not Himself. For inasmuch as He is God He has the same fruitfulness or capacity of producing as the Father and the Son, only that He does not bring it into action, as He does not produce another Divine Person. But what we want to say is, that the Holy Ghost chose to make use of our Blessed Lady though He had no absolute need of her, to bring His fruitfulness into action, by producing in her and by her Jesus Christ in His members; a mystery of grace unknown to even the wisest and most spiritual among Christians.

The conduct which the Three Persons of the Most Holy Trinity have deigned to pursue in the Incarnation and first coming of Jesus Christ, They still pursue daily in an invisible manner throughout the whole Church, and They will still pursue it even to the consummation of ages in the last coming of Jesus Christ.

God the Father made an assemblage of all the waters, and He named it the sea (*mare*). He has made an assemblage of all His graces, and He has called it Mary (*Maria*). This great God has a most rich treasury in which He has laid up all that He has of beauty, of splendor, of rarity, and of preciousness, even to His own Son; and this immense treasury is none other than Mary, whom the Saints have named the Treasure of the Lord, out of whose plenitude all men are made rich.

God the Son has communicated to His Mother all that He has acquired by His Life and by His Death, His infinite merits and His admirable virtues; and He has made her the treasuress of all that His Father has given Him for His inheritance. It is by her that He applies His merits to His members, and that He communicates His virtues, and distributes His graces. She is His mysterious

canal; she is His aqueduct, through which she makes His mercies flow gently and abundantly.

To Mary, His faithful Spouse, God the Holy Ghost has communicated His unspeakable gifts; and He has chosen her to be the dispensatrix of all He possesses, in such sort that she distributes to whom she wills, as much as she wills, as she wills, and when she wills all His gifts and graces. The Holy Ghost gives no heavenly gift to men which He does not pass through her virginal hands. Such has been the Will of God, who has willed that we should have everything in Mary; so that she who impoverished, humbled, and hid herself even to the abyss of nothingness by her profound humility her whole life long, should now be enriched, and exalted by the Most High. Such are the sentiments of the Church and the Holy Fathers.

Inasmuch as grace perfects nature, and glory perfects grace, it is certain that our Lord is still, in heaven, as much the Son of Mary as He was on earth; and that, consequently, He has preserved the most perfect obedience and submission of all children towards the best of all mothers. But we must take great pains not to conceive of this dependence as

any abasement or imperfection in Jesus Christ. For Mary is infinitely below her Son, who is God, and therefore she does not command Him, as a mother here below would command her child, who is below her. Mary, being altogether transformed into God by grace, and by the glory which transforms all the Saints into Him, asks nothing, wishes nothing, does nothing which is contrary to the Eternal and Immutable Will of God.

If Moses, by the force of his prayer, arrested the anger of God against the Israelites, in a manner so powerful that the Most High and infinitely merciful Lord, being unable to resist him, told him to let Him alone, that He might be angry with and punish that rebellious people, what must we not with much greater reason think of the prayer of the humble Mary, that worthy Mother of God, which is more powerful with His Majesty than the prayers and intercessions of all the Angels and Saints both in heaven and on earth?

Mary commands in the heavens the Angels and the Blessed. As a recompense for her profound humility, God has given her the power and permission to fill with Saints the empty thrones from which the apostate angels fell by pride. Such has been the will of the Most High,

who exalts the humble, that heaven, earth, and hell bend with good will or bad will to the commandments of the humble Mary, whom He has made sovereign of heaven and earth, general of His armies, treasurer of His treasures, dispenser of His graces, worker of His greatest marvels, restorer of the human race, mediatrix of men, the exterminator of the enemies of God, and the faithful companion of His grandeurs and His triumphs.

All the true children of God, the predestinate, have God for their Father, and Mary for their Mother. He who has not Mary for his Mother has not God for his Father. This is the reason why the reprobate, such as heretics, schismatics, and others, who hate our Blessed Lady, or regard her with contempt and indifference, have not God for their Father, however much they boast of it, simply because they have not Mary for their Mother. For if they had her for their Mother, they would love and honor her as a true and good child naturally loves and honors the mother who has given him life.

The most infallible and indubitable sign by which we may distinguish a heretic, a man of bad doctrine, a reprobate, from one of the predestinate, is that the heretic and the reprobate

have nothing but contempt and indifference for our Blessed Lady, endeavoring by their words and examples to diminish the worship and love of her openly or hiddenly, and sometimes under specious pretexts. Alas! God the Father has not told Mary to dwell in them, for they are Esaus.

"This man and that man is born in her," says the Holy Ghost, — *Homo et homo natus est in ea* (Ps. lxxxvi. 5). According to the explanation of some of the Fathers, the first man that is born in Mary is the Man-God, Jesus Christ; the second is a mere man, the child of God and Mary by adoption. If Jesus Christ the Head of men is born in her, the predestinate who are the members of that Head ought also to be born in her by a necessary consequence. One and the same mother does not bring forth into the world the head without the members, nor the members without the head; for this would be a monster of nature. So in like manner, in the order of grace, the Head and the members are born of one and the same Mother; and if a member of the mystical Body of Jesus Christ — that is to say, one of the predestinate — was born of any other mother than Mary who has produced the Head, he would not be one of the predestinate, nor a member of Jesus Christ,

but simply a monster in the order of grace. Besides this, Jesus being at present as much as ever the Fruit of Mary, — as heaven and earth repeat thousands and thousands of times a day, "and Blessed be the Fruit of thy womb, Jesus," — it is certain that Jesus Christ is, for each man in particular who possesses Him, as truly the fruit of the womb of Mary as He is for the whole world in general; so that if any one of the faithful has Jesus Christ formed in his Heart, he can say boldly, "All thanks be to Mary! What I possess is her effect and her fruit, and without her I should never have had it." We can apply to her more truly than St. Paul applied to himself those words, *Quos iterum parturio donec formetur Christus in vobis*, — "I am in labor again with all the children of God, until Jesus Christ my Son be formed in them in the fulness of His age." St. Augustine, surpassing himself, and going beyond all I have yet said, affirms that all the predestinate, in order to be conformed to the image of the Son of God, are in this world hidden in the womb of the most holy Virgin, where they are guarded, nourished, brought up, and made to grow by that good Mother until she has brought them forth to glory after death, which is properly the day of their birth, as the Church calls

the death of the just. O mystery of grace, unknown to the reprobate, and but little known even to the predestinate!

Mary has produced, together with the Holy Ghost, the greatest thing which has been, or ever will be, which is a God-Man; and she will consequently produce the greatest thing, that there will be in the latter times.

The formation and education of the great Saints, who shall come at the end of the world, are reserved for her. For it is only that singular and miraculous Virgin who can produce, in union with the Holy Ghost, singular and extraordinary things.

When the Holy Ghost, her Spouse, has found Mary in a soul, He flies there. He enters there in His fulness; He communicates Himself to that soul abundantly, and to the full extent to which she makes room for her Spouse. Nay, one of the great reasons why the Holy Ghost does not now do startling wonders in our souls is because He does not find there a sufficiently great union with His faithful and indissoluble Spouse. I say indissoluble Spouse, because since that Substantial Love of the Father and the Son has espoused Mary, in order to produce Jesus Christ, the Head of the elect, and Jesus Christ in the

elect, He has never repudiated her, inasmuch as she has always been fruitful and faithful. We may evidently conclude, then, from what I have said (1), That Mary has received from God a great domination over the souls of the elect; for she cannot make her residence in them, as God the Father ordered her to do, and form them in Jesus Christ, or Jesus Christ in them, and strike the roots of her virtues in their hearts, and be the indissoluble companion of the Holy Ghost in all His works of grace —she cannot, I say, do all these things unless she has a right and domination over their souls by a singular grace of the Most High, who, having given her power over His only and Natural Son, has given it also to her over His adopted children, not only as to their bodies, which would be but little matter, but also as to their souls.

Mary is the Queen of heaven and earth by grace, as Jesus is the King of them by nature and by conquest. Now, as the kingdom of Jesus Christ consists principally in the heart and interior of a man,—according to that word, "The kingdom of God is within you," —in like manner the kingdom of our Blessed Lady is principally in the interior of a man, that is to say, his soul; and it is principally in

souls that she is more glorified with her Son than in all visible creatures, and that we can call her, as the Saints do, the Queen of hearts.

(2) We must conclude that, the most holy Virgin being necessary to God by a necessity which we call hypothetical, in consequence of His Will, she is far more necessary to men, in order for them to arrive at their Last End. We must not confound devotions to our Blessed Lady with devotions to the other Saints, as if devotion to her was not far more necessary than devotion to them, or as if devotion to her were a matter of supererogation.

The learned and pious Suarez the Jesuit, the erudite and devout Justus Lipsius doctor of Louvain, and many others, have proved invincibly, in consequence of the sentiments of the Fathers (and among others, of St. Augustine, St. Ephrem deacon of Edessa, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Germanus of Constantinople, St. John Damascene, St. Anselm, St. Bernard, St. Bernardine, St. Thomas, and St. Bonaventure), that devotion to our Blessed Lady is necessary to salvation, and that, even in the opinion of Œcolampadius and some other heretics, it is an infallible mark of reprobation to have no esteem and love for the holy Virgin; while on the other hand it is an

infallible mark of predestination to be entirely and truly devoted to her.

Among all the passages of the holy Fathers and doctors, of which I have made an ample collection in order to prove this truth, I shall, for brevity's sake, quote but one: *Tibi devotum esse, est arma quædam salutis quæ Deus his dat, quos vult salvos fieri,*—"To be devout to you, O holy Virgin," says St. John Damascene, "is an arm of salvation which God gives to those whom He wishes to save." I could bring forward here many histories which prove the same thing, and, among others, one which is related in the chronicles of St. Dominic. There was an unhappy heretic near Carcassonne, where St. Dominic was preaching the Rosary, who was possessed by a legion of fifteen thousand devils. These evil spirits were compelled, to their confusion, by the commandment of our Blessed Lady, to avow many great and consoling truths, touching devotion to the holy Virgin; and they did this with so much force and so much clearness, that it is not possible to read this authentic history, and the panegyric which the devil made, in spite of himself, of devotion to the most holy Mary, without shedding tears of joy, however lukewarm we may be in our devotion to her.

If devotion to the most holy Virgin Mary is necessary to all men, simply for working out their salvation, it is still more so for those who are called to any particular perfection; and I do not think any one can acquire an intimate union with our Lord, and a perfect fidelity to the Holy Ghost, without a very great union with the most holy Virgin, and a great dependence on her succor.

It is Mary alone who has found grace before God without the aid of any other mere creature; it is only by her that all those who have found grace before God have found it at all; and it is only by her that all those who shall come afterwards shall find it. She was full of grace when she was saluted by the Archangel Gabriel, and she was superabundantly filled with grace by the Holy Ghost when He covered her with His unspeakable Shadow; and she has so augmented, from day to day and from moment to moment, this double plenitude, that she has reached a point of grace immense and inconceivable; in such sort that the Most High has made her the sole treasurer of His treasures, and the sole dispenser of His graces, to ennoble, to exalt, and to enrich whom she wishes; to give the entry to whom she wills into the narrow way of heaven; to pass whom

she wills, and in spite of all obstacles, through the strait gate of life; and to give the throne, the sceptre, and the crown of the King to whom she wills. Jesus is everywhere and always the Fruit and the Son of Mary; and Mary is everywhere the veritable tree who bears the Fruit of life, and the true Mother who produces it.

It is Mary alone to whom God has given the keys of the cellars of divine love, and the power to enter into the most sublime and secret ways of perfection, and the power likewise to make others enter in there also. It is Mary alone who has given to the miserable children of Eve, the faithless, the entry into the terrestrial paradise, that they may walk there agreeably with God, hide themselves there securely against their enemies, and feed themselves there deliciously, without any more fear of death, on the fruit of the trees of life and of the knowledge of good and evil, and drink in long draughts the heavenly waters of that fair fountain which gushes forth there with abundance; or rather she is herself that terrestrial paradise, that virgin and blessed earth, from which Adam and Eve, the sinners, have been driven, and she gives no entry there except to those whom it is her pleasure

to make Saints. It is Mary's will to form great Saints.

This would come to pass particularly at the end of the world, and indeed, presently, because the Most High with His holy Mother has to form for Himself great Saints, who shall surpass most of the other Saints in sanctity, as much as the cedars of Lebanon outgrow the little shrubs, as has been revealed to a holy soul, whose life has been written by a great servant of God.

It is this which God revealed to St. Vincent Ferrer, the great apostle of his age, as he has sufficiently noted in one of his works.

It is by Mary that the salvation of the world has begun, and it is by Mary that it must be consummated. Mary has hardly appeared at all in the first coming of Jesus Christ, in order that men, as yet but little instructed and enlightened on the Person of her Son, should not remove themselves from Him, in attaching themselves too strongly and too grossly to her. This would have apparently taken place if she had been known, because of the admirable charms which the Most High had bestowed even upon her exterior. This is so true that St. Denys the Areopagite has informed us in his writings, that when he saw

our Blessed Lady he should have taken her for a Divinity, in consequence of her secret charms and incomparable beauty, had not the Faith in which he was well established taught him the contrary. But in the second coming of Jesus Christ, Mary has to be made known and revealed by the Holy Ghost, in order that by her Jesus Christ may be known, loved, and served. The reasons which moved the Holy Ghost to hide His Spouse during her life, and to reveal her but a very little since the preaching of the Gospel, subsist no longer.

God, then, wishes to reveal and discover Mary, the masterpiece of His hands, in these latter times:

1. Because she hid herself in this world, and put herself lower than the dust by her profound humility, having obtained of God and of His Apostles and Evangelists that she should not be made manifest.

2. Because, being the masterpiece of the hands of God, as well here below by grace as in heaven by glory, He wishes to be glorified and praised in her by those who are living upon the earth.

3. As she is the aurora which precedes and discovers the Sun of Justice, who is Jesus Christ, she ought to be recognized and perceived, in order that Jesus Christ may be so.

4. Being the way by which Jesus Christ came to us the first time, she will also be the way by which He will come the second time, though not in the same manner.

5. Being the sure means and the straight and immaculate way to go to Jesus Christ, and to find Him perfectly, it is by her that the holy souls, who are to shine forth especially in sanctity, have to find our Lord. He who shall find Mary shall find life; that is, Jesus Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. But no one can find Mary who does not seek her, and no one can seek her who does not know her—for we cannot seek or desire an unknown object. It is necessary, then, for the greater knowledge and glory of the Most Holy Trinity, that Mary should be more known than ever.

6. Mary must shine forth more than ever in mercy, in might, and in grace, in these latter times, to bring back and lovingly receive the poor strayed sinners who shall be converted and shall return to the Catholic Church.

7. And, lastly, Mary must be terrible to the devil and his crew, as an army ranged in battle, principally in these latter times, because the devil, knowing that he has but little time, and now less than ever, to destroy souls, will every day redouble his efforts and his combats. He

will presently raise up new persecutions, and will put terrible snares before the faithful servants and true children of Mary, whom it gives him more trouble to surmount than it does to conquer others.

Inimicitias ponam inter te et mulierem, et semen tuum et semen illius; ipsa conteret caput tuum, et tu insidiaberis calcaneo ejus (Gen. iii. 15), — "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel."

God has never made or formed but one enmity; but it is an irreconcilable one, which shall endure and develop even to the end. It is between Mary, His worthy Mother, and the devil, — between the children and the servants of the Blessed Virgin and the children and instruments of Lucifer. The most terrible of all the enemies which God has set up against the devil is His holy Mother, Mary. He has inspired her, even since the days of the earthly Paradise, though she existed then only in His idea, with so much hatred against that cursed enemy of God, with so much industry in unveiling the malice of that old serpent, with so much power to conquer, to overthrow, and to crush that proud, impious rebel, that he fears her not only more than all Angels and men, but in some sense

more than God Himself. It is not that the anger, the hatred, and the power of God are not infinitely greater than those of the Blessed Virgin, for the perfections of Mary are limited, but it is, first, because Satan, being proud, suffers infinitely more from being beaten and punished by a little and humble handmaid of God, and her humility humbles him more than the Divine power; and, secondly, because God has given Mary such a great power against the devils, that, as they have often been obliged to confess, in spite of themselves, by the mouths of the possessed, they fear one of her sighs for a soul more than the prayers of all the Saints, and one of her menaces against them more than all other torments.

What Lucifer has lost by pride, Mary has gained by humility. What Eve has damned and lost by disobedience, Mary has saved by obedience. Eve, in obeying the serpent, has destroyed all her children together with herself, and has delivered them to him; Mary, being perfectly faithful to God, has saved all her children and servants together with herself, and has consecrated them to His Majesty. She will always discover the malice of the serpent. She will always counterwork his infernal mines and dissipate his diabolical counsels, and will

guarantee even to the end of time her faithful servants from his cruel claw.

In a word, God wishes that His holy Mother should be at present more known, more loved, more honored, than she has ever been. This, no doubt, will take place if the predestinate enter, with the grace and light of the Holy Ghost, into the interior and perfect practice which I will disclose to them shortly. Then they will see clearly, as far as faith allows, that beautiful Star of the Sea. They will arrive happily in harbor, following its guidance, in spite of the tempests and the pirates. They will know the grandeurs of that Queen, and will consecrate themselves entirely to her service, as subjects and slaves of love. They will experience her sweetnesses and her maternal goodnesses, and they will love her tenderly like well-beloved children. They will know the mercies of which she is full, and the need they have of her succor; and they will have recourse to her in all things, as to their dear advocate and mediatrix with Jesus Christ. They will know what is the most sure, the most easy, the most short, and the most perfect means by which to go to Jesus Christ; and they will deliver themselves to Mary, body and soul, without reserve, that they may thus be all for Jesus Christ.

But who shall be those servants, slaves, and children of Mary? They shall be a burning fire of the ministers of the Lord, who shall kindle the fire of divine love everywhere, and *sicut sagittæ in manu potentis*,—"like sharp arrows in the hand of the powerful" Mary to pierce her enemies. They shall be the sons of Levi, well purified by the fire of great tribulation, and closely adhering to God; who shall carry the gold of love in their heart, the incense of prayer in their spirit, and the myrrh of mortification in their body; and they shall be everywhere the good odor of Jesus Christ to the poor and to the little, while they shall be an odor of death to the great, to the rich, and to the proud worldlings.

They shall be the true apostles of the latter times, to whom the Lord of Hosts shall give the word and the might to work marvels, and to carry off the glory of the spoils of His enemies. They shall sleep without gold or silver, and, what is more, without care, in the middle of the other priests, ecclesiastics, and clerks, *inter medios cleros;* and yet they shall have the silvered wings of the dove, to go, with the pure intention of the glory of God and the salvation of souls, wheresoever the Holy Ghost shall call them.

They shall have in their mouths the two-edged sword of the Word of God. They shall carry on their shoulders the bloody standard of the cross, the crucifix in their right hand and the rosary in their left, the sacred names of Jesus and Mary in their hearts, and the modesty and mortification of Jesus Christ in their own behavior. These are the great men who shall come. But Mary shall be there by the order of the Most High, to extend His empire over that of the impious, the idolaters, and the Mahometans. But when and how shall this be? God alone knows. It is for us to hold our tongues, to pray, to sigh, and to wait: *Exspectans exspectavi*,—"expecting I have expected."

II. DISCERNMENT OF THE TRUE DEVOTION TO OUR BLESSED LADY.

Having said something so far of the necessity which we have of the devotion to the most holy Virgin, I must now show in what this devotion consists. This I will do, by God's help, after I shall have first presupposed some fundamental truths, which shall throw light on that grand and solid devotion which I desire to disclose.

First Truth. Jesus Christ our Saviour, true God and true Man, ought to be the last end of all our other devotions, else they are false and delusive. Jesus Christ is the *alpha* and *omega*, the beginning and the end of all things. We labor not, as the Apostle says, except to render every man perfect in Jesus Christ; because it is in Him alone that the whole plenitude of the Divinity dwells, together with all the other plenitudes of graces, virtues, and perfections; because it is in Him alone that we have been blessed with all spiritual benediction; and because He is our only Master, who has to teach us; our only Lord, on whom we ought to depend; our only Head, to whom we must belong; our only Model, to whom we should conform ourselves; our only Physician, who can heal us; our only Shepherd, who can feed us; our only Way, who can lead us; our only Truth, who can make us grow; our only Life, who can animate us; and our only All in all things, who can suffice us. There has been no other name given under heaven, except the name of Jesus, by which we can be saved. God has laid no other foundation of our salvation, of our perfection, and of our glory, except Jesus Christ.

If, then, we establish the solid devotion to

our Blessed Lady, it is only to establish more perfectly the devotion to Jesus Christ, and to put forward an easy and secure means for finding Jesus Christ. If devotion to our Lady removed us from Jesus Christ, we should have to reject it as an illusion of the devil; but on the contrary, so far from this being the case, there is nothing which makes devotion to our Lady more necessary for us, as I have already shown and will show still further hereafter, than that it is the means of finding Jesus Christ perfectly, of loving Him tenderly, and of serving Him faithfully.

I here turn for one moment to Thee, O my sweet Jesus, to complain lovingly to Thy Divine Majesty that the greater part of Christians, even the most learned, do not know the necessary union which there is between Thee and Thy holy Mother. Thou, Lord, art always with Mary, and Mary is always with Thee, and she cannot be without Thee, else she would cease to be what she is. She is so transformed into Thee by grace that she lives no more, that she is as though she were not. It is Thou only, my Jesus, who livest and reignest in her more perfectly than in all the Angels and the Blessed. Ah! if we knew the glory and the love which Thou receivest in

this admirable creature, we should have very different thoughts both of Thee and her from what we have now. She is so intimately united with Thee that it were easier to separate the light from the sun, the heat from the fire. I say more: it were easier to separate from Thee all the Angels and the Saints than the divine Mary, because she loves Thee more ardently, and glorifies Thee more perfectly, than all other creatures put together.

After that, my sweet Master, is it not an astonishingly pitiable thing to see the ignorance and the darkness of all men here below in regard to Thy holy Mother? I speak not so much of idolaters and pagans, who, knowing Thee not, care not to know Thee; I speak not even of heretics and schismatics, who care not to be devout to Thy holy Mother, being separated as they are from Thee and Thy holy Church, but I speak of Catholic Christians, and even of doctors amongst Catholics, who make profession of teaching truths to others, and yet know not Thee nor Thy holy Mother, except in a speculative, dry, barren, and indifferent manner. These doctors speak but rarely of Thy holy Mother and of the devotion which we ought to have to her, because they fear, so they say, lest we should abuse it,

and should do some injury to Thee in too much honoring Thy holy Mother. If they see or hear any one devout to our Blessed Lady, speaking often of his devotion to that good Mother in a tender, strong, and persuasive way, as of a secure means without delusion, as of a short road without danger, as of an immaculate way without imperfection, and as of a wonderful secret for finding and loving Thee perfectly, they cry out against him, and give him a thousand false reasons by way of proving to him that he ought not to talk so much of our Blessed Lady, that there are great abuses in that devotion, and that we must direct our energies to destroy these abuses, and to speak of Thee, rather than to incline the people to devotion to our Blessed Lady, whom they already love sufficiently.

O my sweet Jesus, have these people got Thy spirit? Do they please Thee in acting thus? Is it to please Thee, to spare one single effort to please Thy Mother for fear of thereby displeasing Thee? Does devotion to Thy holy Mother hinder devotion to Thyself? Is it that she attributes to herself the honor which we pay her? Is it that she makes a side for herself apart? Is it that she is an alien, who has no union with Thee? Keep

me, Lord,—keep me from their sentiments and their practices, and give me some share in the sentiments of gratitude, esteem, respect, and love which Thou hadst in regard to Thy holy Mother, in order that I may love Thee and glorify Thee all the more, by imitating and following Thee more closely.

So, as if up to this point I had still said nothing in honor of Thy holy Mother, "give me now the grace to praise her worthily,"—*fac me digne tuam, Matrem collaudare,*—in spite of all her enemies, who are Thine as well; and grant me to say loudly with the Saints, *Non præsumat aliquis Deum se habere propitium, qui benedictam Matrem offensam habuerit,*—"Let not that man presume to look for the mercy of God who offends His holy Mother." To obtain of Thy mercy a true devotion to Thy holy Mother, and to inspire it to the whole earth, make me to love Thee ardently; and for that end receive the burning prayer which I make to Thee with St. Augustine and Thy true friends.

Thou art Christ, my holy Father, my tender God, my great King, my good Shepherd, my one Master, my best Helper, my most Beautiful and my Beloved, my living Bread, my Priest forever, my Leader to my country, my

true Light, my holy Sweetness, my straight Way, my excellent Wisdom, my pure Simplicity, my pacific Harmony, my whole Guard, my good Portion, my everlasting Salvation.

Christ Jesus, sweet Lord, why have I ever loved, why in my whole life have I ever desired anything except Thee, Jesus my God? Where was I, when I was not in Thy mind with Thee? Now, from this time forth, do ye, all my desires, grow hot, and flow out upon the Lord Jesus; run,—ye have been tardy so far; hasten whither ye are going; seek whom ye are seeking. O Jesus, may he who loves Thee not be anathema; may he who loves Thee not be filled with bitterness!

O sweet Jesus, may every good feeling that is fitted for Thy praise love Thee, delight in Thee, admire Thee, God of my heart, and my Portion! Christ Jesus, may my heart faint away in spirit, and mayest Thou be my life within me! May the live coal of Thy love grow hot within my spirit, and break forth into a perfect fire; may it burn incessantly on the altar of my heart; may it glow in my innermost being; may it blaze in hidden recesses of my soul; and in the day of my consummation may I be found consummated with Thee! Amen.

Second Truth. We must conclude, from

what Jesus Christ is with regard to us, that we do not belong to ourselves, but, as the Apostle says, are entirely His, as His members and His slaves, whom He has bought at an infinitely dear price,—the price of all His Blood. Before Baptism we belonged to the devil, as his slaves; but Baptism has made us true slaves of Jesus Christ, who have no right to live, to work, or to die, except to bring forth fruit for that God-Man, to glorify Him in our bodies, and to let Him reign in our souls, because we are His conquest, His acquired people, and His inheritance. It is for the same reason that the Holy Ghost compares us, 1, to trees planted along the waters of grace in the field of the Church, who ought to bring forth their fruit in their seasons; 2, to the branches of a vine, of which Jesus Christ is the stock, and which must yield good grapes; 3, to a flock of which Jesus Christ is the shepherd, and which is to multiply and give milk; 4, to a good land, of which God is the laborer, in which the seed multiplies itself, and brings forth thirty-fold, sixty-fold, and a hundred-fold. Jesus Christ cursed the unfruitful fig-tree, and gave sentence against the useless servant, who had not made any profit on his talent. All this proves to us that Jesus Christ

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wishes to receive some fruits from our wretched selves, namely, our good works, because those good works belong to Him alone: *Creati in operibus bonis in Christo Jesu*, — "Created in good works in Christ Jesus,"—which words show both that Jesus Christ is the sole principle, and ought to be the sole end of all our good works, and also that we ought to serve Him, not as servants on wages, but as slaves of love. I will explain myself:

Here on earth there are two ways of belonging to another, and of depending on his authority, namely, simple service and slavery,—what we mean by a servant, and what we mean by a slave.

By common service amongst Christians a man engages himself to serve another, during a certain time, at a certain rate of wages or of recompense.

By slavery a man is entirely dependent on another for his whole life, and must serve his master without pretending to any wages or reward, just as one of his beasts, over which he has the right of life and death.

There are three sorts of slavery: a slavery of nature, a slavery of constraint, and a slavery of the will. All creatures are slaves of God in the first sense: *Domini est terra et plenitudo*

ejus,—"The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness of it." The demons and the damned are slaves in the second sense; the just and the Saints in the third. The slavery of the will is the most glorious to God, who looks at the heart, claims the heart, and calls Himself the God of the heart, that is, of the loving will, because by that slavery we make choice of God and His service above all things, even when nature does not oblige us to it.

There is an entire difference between a servant and a slave: 1. A servant does not give all he is, all he has, and all he can acquire by himself or by another, to his master; but the slave gives himself whole and entire to his master, all he has and all he can gain, without any exception. 2. The servant exacts wages for the services which he performs for his master; but the slave can exact nothing, whatever assiduity, whatever industry, whatever energy, he may have at his work. 3. The servant can leave his master when he pleases, or at least when the time of his service shall be expired; but the slave has no right to quit his master at his will. 4. The master of the servant has no right of life and death over him, so that if he kill him like one of his beasts of burden he would commit an unjust homicide; but the

master of the slave has by the law a right of life and death over him, so that he may sell him to anybody he likes, or kill him, as if he stood on the same level as one of his horses. 5. Lastly, the servant is only for a time in his master's service ; the slave is for always.

There is nothing among men which makes us belong to another more than slavery. There is nothing among Christians which makes us more absolutely belong to Jesus Christ and His holy Mother than the slavery of the will, according to the example of Jesus Christ Himself, who took on Him the form of a slave for love of us,—*Forman servi accipiens*,—and also according to the example of the holy Virgin, who is called the servant and the slave of the Lord. The Apostle calls himself, as by a title of honor, *Servus Christi*,—"The slave of Christ." Christians are often called in the Holy Scriptures *Servi Christi*,—"Slaves of Christ,"—which word *servus*, as a great man has truly remarked, signified in old times nothing but a slave, because there were no servants then like those of the present day. Masters were served only either by slaves or by freedmen. It is this which the catechism of the Holy Council of Trent, in order to leave no doubt about our being slaves of Jesus

Christ, expresses, by an unequivocal term, in calling us *Mancipia Christi*,—"Slaves of Jesus Christ."

Having premised this, I say that we ought to be to Jesus Christ and to serve Him not only as mercenary servants, but as loving slaves, who, by an effect of great love, give themselves up to serve Him in the quality of slaves, for the simple honor of belonging to Him. Before Baptism we were the slaves of the devil! Baptism has made us the slaves of Jesus Christ. Christians must needs be either the slaves of the devil or the slaves of Jesus Christ.

What I say absolutely of Jesus Christ, I say relatively of our Blessed Lady. Jesus Christ, having chosen her for the inseparable companion of His life, of His death, of His glory, and of His power in heaven and upon earth, has given her by grace, relatively to His Majesty, all the same rights and privileges which He possesses by nature. *Quidquid Deo convenit per naturam, Mariæ convenit per gratiam*, —"All that is fitting to God by nature is fitting to Mary by grace,"—say the Saints; so that, according to them, Mary and Jesus having but the same will and the same power, the two have the same subjects, servants, and slaves.

We may, therefore, following the sentiments of the saints and of many great men, call ourselves, and make ourselves, the loving slaves of the most holy Virgin, in order to be by that very means the more perfectly the slaves of Jesus Christ. Our Blessed Lady is the means our Lord made use of to come to us. She is also the means which we must make use of to go to Him. For she is not like all the rest of creatures, who, if we should attach ourselves to them, might rather draw us away from God than draw us near Him. The strongest inclination of Mary is to unite us to Jesus Christ her Son; and the strongest inclination of the Son is, that we should come to Him by His holy Mother. It is to honor and please Him, just as it would be to do honor and pleasure to a king, to become more perfectly His subject and His slave, by making ourselves the slaves of the queen. It is on this account that the holy Fathers, and St. Bonaventure after them, said that our Lady was the way to go to our Lord: *Via veniendi ad Christum est appropinquare ad illam*, — "The way of coming to Christ is to draw near to her."

Moreover, if, as I have said, the holy Virgin is the Queen and Sovereign of heaven and of earth, then is it not true what has been said

by St. Anselm, St. Bernard, St. Bernardine, and St. Bonaventure, — has she not as many subjects and slaves as there are creatures? *Imperio Dei omnia subjiciuntur, et Virgo; ecce imperio Virginis omnia subjiciuntur, et Deus,* — "All things, the Virgin included, are subject to the empire of God; behold all things, and God included, are subject to the empire of the Virgin." Is it not reasonable that amongst so many slaves of constraint there should be some of love, who of their own good will, in the quality of slaves, should choose Mary for their mistress? What! are men and devils to have their voluntary slaves and Mary to have none? What! shall a king hold it to be for his honor that the queen, his companion, should have slaves over whom she has the right of life and death, because the honor and power of the one is the honor and power of the other, and yet are we to think that our Lord, who, as the best of all Sons, has divided His entire power with His holy Mother, shall take it ill that she too has her slaves? Has He less respect and love for His Mother than Ahasuerus had for Esther, or than Solomon for Bethsabee? Who shall dare to say so, or even to think it?

But whither is my pen hurrying me? Why

am I stopping here to prove a thing so plain? If we do not wish to call ourselves slaves of the Blessed Virgin, what matter? Let us make ourselves and call ourselves slaves of Jesus Christ; for that is to be the slave of the holy Virgin, inasmuch as Jesus is the fruit and the glory of Mary; and it is this very thing which we do, by the devotion of which we are hereafter to speak.

Third Truth. Our best actions are ordinarily stained and corrupted by the ground of evil, which is so deeply laid up in us. When we put clean and clear water into a vessel which has a foul and evil smell, or wine into a cask the inside of which has been spoilt by another wine which has been in it, the clear water and the good wine are spoilt, and readily take the bad odor. In like manner, when God puts into the vessel of our soul, spoilt by original and actual sin, His graces and heavenly dews, or the delicious wine of His love, His gifts are ordinarily spoilt and corrupted by the bad leaven and the evil which sin has left within us. Our actions, even the most sublime and virtuous, feel the effects of it. It is therefore of great importance in the acquiring of perfection, which it must be remembered is only acquired by union with Jesus Christ, to empty

ourselves of everything which is bad within us; otherwise our Lord, who is infinitely pure and hates infinitely the least stain upon our souls, will cast us out from His presence and will not unite Himself to us.

1. To empty ourselves of ourselves, we must, first, thoroughly recognize, by the light of the Holy Ghost, our inward corruption, our incapacity for every good thing useful for salvation, our weakness in all things, our inconstancy at all times, our indignity of every grace, and our iniquity in every position. The sin of our first father has spoilt us all, soured us, puffed us up and corrupted us, as the leaven sours, puffs, and corrupts the paste into which it is put. The actual sins which we have committed, whether mortal or venial, pardoned though they may be, have nevertheless increased our concupiscence, our weakness, our inconstancy, and our corruption, and have left evil consequences in our souls. Our bodies are so corrupted that they are called by the Holy Ghost bodies of sin, conceived in sin, nourished in sin, and capable of all sin,—bodies subject to thousands of maladies, which go on corrupting from day to day, and which engender nothing but disease, vermin, and corruption.

Our soul, united to our body, has become so carnal that it is called flesh. "All flesh having corrupted its way," we have nothing for our portion but pride and blindness in the spirit, hardness in the heart, weakness and inconstancy in the soul, concupiscence, revolted passions, and sickness in the body. We are naturally prouder than peacocks, more grovelling on the earth than toads, more vile than unclean animals, more envious than serpents, more gluttonous than hogs, more furious than tigers, lazier than tortoises, weaker than reeds, and more capricious than weathercocks. We have down in our own selves nothing but nothingness and sin, and we deserve nothing but the anger of God, and the everlasting hell.

After this, ought we to be astonished if our Lord has said, that whosoever wishes to follow Him must renounce himself and hate his own soul, and that whosoever shall love his own soul shall lose it, and whosoever shall hate it shall save it? He who is infinite Wisdom does not give commandments without reason, and He has only commanded us to hate ourselves because we so richly deserve to be hated. Nothing is worthier of love than God, and nothing is worthier of hatred than ourselves.

2. Secondly, in order to empty ourselves

of ourselves, we must die to ourselves daily. That is to say, we must renounce the operations of the powers of our soul, and of the senses of our body. We must see as if we saw not, understand as if we understood not, and make use of the things of this world as if we made no use of them at all. This is what St. Paul calls dying daily,—*Quotidie morior.* "If the grain of corn falling on the earth does not die, it remains earth, and brings forth no good fruit,"—*Nisi granum frumenti, cadens in terram, mortuum fuerit, ipsum solum manet.* If we die not to ourselves, and if our holiest devotions do not incline us to this necessary and useful death, we shall bring forth no fruit worth anything, and our devotions will become useless. All our justices will be stained by self-love and our own will; and this will cause God to hold in abomination the greatest sacrifices we can make, and the best actions we can do; so that at our death we shall find our hands empty of virtues and of merits, and we shall not have one spark of pure love, which is only communicated to souls dead to themselves, souls whose life is hidden with Jesus Christ in God.

3. We must choose, therefore, among all the devotions to the Blessed Virgin, the one which

draws us most towards this death to ourselves, inasmuch as it will be the best and the most sanctifying. For we must not think that all that shines is gold, that all that tastes sweet is honey, or all that is easy to do and is done by the greatest number is sanctifying. As there are secrets of nature to do in a short time, at little cost and with facility, natural operations, so also in like manner there are secrets in the order of grace to do in a short time, with sweetness and facility, supernatural operations, such as emptying ourselves of self, filling ourselves with God, and becoming perfect.

The practice which I am about to disclose is one of these secrets of grace, unknown by the greater number of Christians, known even to few of the devout, and practised and relished by a far less number still. But in order to begin to disclose this practice, let us consider a fourth truth, which is a consequence of the third.

Fourth Truth. It is more perfect, because it is more humble, not to approach God of ourselves, without taking a mediator. The very foundation of our nature, as I have just shown, is so corrupted, that if we lean on our own works, industries, and preparations, in order to reach God and to please Him, it is certain

that our justices will be defiled, or be of little weight before God, to engage Him to unite Himself to us, and to hear us. It is not without reason that God has given us mediators with His Majesty. He has seen our unworthiness and incapacity. He has had pity upon us; and, in order to give us access to His mercies, He has provided us with powerful intercessors with His grandeur, insomuch that to neglect these mediators, and to draw near to His Holiness directly, and without any recommendation, is to fail in humility. It is to fail in respect towards God, so high and so holy. It is to make less account of that King of kings than we should make of a king or prince of earth, whom we should not willingly approach without some friend to speak for us.

Our Lord is our Advocate and Mediator of redemption with God the Father. It is by Him that we ought to pray, in union with the whole Church triumphant and militant. It is by Him that we have access to the Majesty of the Father, before whom we ought never to appear except leaning on the merits, and indeed clothed with the merits, of His Son; just as the young Jacob came before his father Isaac in the skins of the kids to receive his benediction.

But have we not need of a mediator with the Mediator Himself? Is our purity great enough to unite us directly to Him, and by ourselves? Is He not God, in all things equal to His Father, and by consequence the Holy of Holies, as worthy of respect as His Father? If, by His infinite charity, He has made Himself our bail and our Mediator with God His Father, in order to appease Him and to pay Him what we owed Him, are we on that account to have less respect and less fear for His Majesty and His Sanctity?

Let us say boldly with St. Bernard that we have need of a mediator with the Mediator Himself, and that it is the Immaculate Mary who is the most capable of filling that charitable office. It is by her that Jesus Christ came, and it is by her that we must go to Him. If we fear to go directly to Jesus Christ our God, whether because of His infinite greatness, or because of our vileness, or because of our sins, let us boldly implore the aid and intercession of Mary our Mother.

She is so powerful that never have any of her petitions been refused. She has but to show herself before her Son to pray to Him, and straightway He grants her desires, straightway He receives her prayers. He is always

lovingly vanquished by the breasts, the yearnings, and the prayers of His dearest Mother. All this is drawn from St. Bernard and from St. Bonaventure, so that, according to them, we have three steps to mount to go to God: the first, which is the nearest to us, and the most suited to our capacity, is Mary; the second is Jesus Christ; and the third is God the Father. To go to Jesus we must go to Mary; she is our mediatrix of intercession. To go to God the Father we must go to Jesus; for He is our Mediator of redemption. Now it is by the devotion which I am about to bring forward that this order is guarded perfectly.

Fifth Truth. It is very difficult, considering our weakness and frailty, to preserve in ourselves the graces and treasures which we have received from God: —

1. Because we have this treasure, which is worth more than heaven and earth put together, in frail vessels (*Habemus thesaurum istum in vasis fictilibus*, — "We have this treasure in earthen vessels"), in a corruptible body and in a weak and inconstant soul, which a mere nothing disturbs and dejects.

2. Because the devils, who are skilful thieves, wish to surprise us unawares, and to strip us.

They watch day and night for the favorable moment. For that end they go round about us incessantly to devour us, and to snatch from us in one moment, by a sin, all that we have gained of graces and of merits for many years. Their malice, their experience, their stratagems, and their number, ought to make us fear immensely this misfortune, especially when we see how many persons, fuller of grace than we are, richer in virtues, better founded in experience, and far higher exalted in sanctity, have been surprised, robbed, and unhappily pillaged. Ah! how many of the cedars of Lebanon, how many of the stars of the firmament, have we not seen to fall miserably, and in the twinkling of an eye to lose all their height and all their brightness! Whence comes that sad and curious change? It has not been for want of grace, which is wanting to no man; but it has been want of humility. They thought themselves stronger and more sufficient than they were. They thought themselves capable of guarding their own treasures. They trusted in themselves, leaned upon themselves. They thought their house secure enough, and their coffers strong enough, to keep the precious treasure of their grace. It is because of that scarcely sensible leaning upon themselves,

while all the while it seemed to them that they were leaning only on the grace of God, that the most just Lord has permitted them to be robbed by leaving them to themselves. Alas! if they had but known the admirable devotion which I will unfold presently, they would have confided their treasure to a Virgin, powerful and faithful, who would have kept it for them as if it had been her own possession; nay, who would have even taken it as an obligation of justice on herself to preserve it for them.

3. It is difficult to persevere in justice because of the strange corruption of the world. The world is now so corrupt that it seems to be inevitable that religious hearts should be soiled, if not by its mud, at least by its dust. So that it has become a kind of miracle for any one to remain firm in the midst of this impetuous torrent without being drawn in by it, in the midst of that stormy sea without being drowned in it or stripped by the pirates and the corsairs, in the midst of that pestilent air without being infected by it. It is the Virgin, alone faithful, in whom the serpent has never had part, who works this miracle for those who serve her in that sweet way which I have shortly to unfold.

Having assumed these Five Truths, we must now take more pains than ever to make a good choice of the true devotion to our Blessed Lady. There are at this time, more than ever, false devotions to our Blessed Lady, which it is easy to mistake for true ones. The devil, like a false coiner and a subtle and experienced sharper, has already deceived and destroyed so many souls by a false devotion to the Blessed Virgin, that he makes a daily use of his diabolical experience to plunge many others by this same way into everlasting perdition; amusing them, lulling them to sleep in sin, under the pretext of some prayers badly said, or of some outward practices which he inspires. As a false coiner does not ordinarily counterfeit anything but gold and silver, or very rarely the other metals, because they are not worth the trouble, so the evil spirit does not for the most part counterfeit the other devotions, but only those to Jesus and Mary, the devotion to Holy Communion, and to our Blessed Lady, because they are, among other devotions, what gold and silver are amongst metals.

It is, then, very important first of all to know (1) false devotions to our Blessed Lady in order to avoid them; and (2) the true de-

votion in order to embrace it. In conclusion, among so many practices of true devotion to our Blessed Lady, I will explain more in detail, in the second part of this treatise, which is the most perfect one, the one most agreeable to our Lady, the most glorious to God, and the most sanctifying to ourselves, in order that we may attach ourselves to it.

1. *On False Devotions to our Lady.*

I find seven kinds of false devotees and false devotions to our Lady, namely, (1) the critical devotees; (2) the scrupulous devotees; (3) the external devotees; (4) the presumptuous devotees; (5) the inconstant devotees; (6) the hypocritical devotees; and (7) the interested devotees.

These are all false devotees, but none worse or more detestable than the presumptuous devotee. For how can we say truly that we love and honor our Blessed Lady, when by our sins we are pitilessly piercing, wounding, crucifying, and outraging Jesus Christ her Son? If Mary laid down a law to herself, to save by her mercy this sort of people, she would be authorizing crime, and assisting to crucify and outrage her Son. Who would dare to think such a thought as that?

I say, that thus to abuse devotion to our Lady, which, after devotion to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, is the holiest and solidest of all devotions, is to be guilty of a horrible sacrilege, which, after the sacrilege of an unworthy Communion, is the greatest and the least pardonable of all sacrileges.

I confess that, in order to be truly devout to our Blessed Lady, it is not absolutely necessary to be so holy as to avoid every sin, though this were to be wished; but so much at least is necessary, and I beg you to lay it well to heart: —

1. To have a sincere resolution to avoid, at least, all mortal sin, which outrages the Mother as well as the Son. 2. I would add also that to do violence to ourselves to avoid sin, to enroll ourselves in confraternities, to say the Rosary or other prayers, to fast on Saturdays, and the like, is wonderfully useful to the conversion of a sinner, however hardened; and if my reader is such a one, even if he has his foot in the abyss, I would counsel these things to him. Nevertheless it must be on the condition that he will only practise these good works with the intention of obtaining from God, by the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, the grace of contrition and the pardon of

his sins, to conquer his evil habits, and not to remain quietly in the state of sin, in spite of the remorse of his conscience, the example of Jesus Christ and the Saints, and the maxims of the holy Gospel.

2. *On the Characters of True Devotion to our Blessed Lady.*

Condemning as we do all false devotions to the most holy Virgin, we must, in a few words, characterize the true devotion. It must be (1) *interior*, (2) *tender*, (3) *holy*, (4) *constant*, and (5) *disinterested.*

1. True devotion to our Lady is *interior;* that is to say, it comes from the spirit and the heart. It flows from the esteem we have of her, the high idea we have formed of her greatness, and the love which we have for her.

2. It is *tender;* that is to say, full of confidence in her, like a child's confidence in his loving mother. This confidence makes the soul have recourse to her in all its bodily or mental necessities, with much simplicity, trust, and tenderness. It implores the aid of its good Mother, at all times, in all places, and about all things; in its doubts, that it may be enlightened; in its wanderings, that it may be

brought into the right path; in its temptations, that it may be supported; in its weaknesses that it may be strengthened; in its falls, that it may be lifted up; in its discouragements, that it may be cheered; in its scruples, that they may be taken away; in its crosses, toils, and disappointments of life, that it may be consoled under them. In a word, in all its evils of body and mind, the soul's ordinary refuge is in Mary, without fearing to be importunate to her or to displease Jesus Christ.

3. True devotion to our Lady is *holy;* that is to say, it leads the soul to avoid sin, and to imitate in the Blessed Virgin particularly her profound humility, her lively faith, her blind obedience, her continual prayer, her universal mortification, her divine purity, her ardent charity, her heroic patience, her angelical sweetness, and her divine wisdom. These are the ten principal virtues of the most holy Virgin.

4. True devotion to our Lady is *constant.* It confirms the soul in good, and it does not let it easily abandon its spiritual exercises. It makes it courageous in opposing the world in its fashions and maxims, the flesh in its wearinesses and passions, and the devil in his temptations. So that a person truly devout to our Blessed Lady is neither changeable, irritable,

scrupulous, nor timid. It is not that such a person does not fall, or change sometimes in the sensible feeling of devotion, or in the amount of devotion itself. But when he falls, he rises again by stretching out his hand to his good Mother. If he loses the taste and relish of devotion, he does not disturb himself because of that; for the just and faithful client of Mary lives on the faith of Jesus and Mary, and not on sentiments and sensibilities.

5. Lastly, true devotion to our Blessed Lady is *disinterested;* that is to say, it inspires the soul not to seek itself but God only, and God in His holy Mother. A true client of Mary does not serve that august Queen from a spirit of lucre and interest, nor for its own good, whether temporal, corporal, or spiritual; but exclusively because she merits to be served, and God alone in her. He does not love Mary precisely because she does him good, or because he hopes in her; but because she is so worthy of love. It is on this account that he loves and serves her as faithfully in his disgusts and drynesses, as in his sweetnesses and sensible fervors. He loves her as much on Calvary, as at the marriage of Cana. Oh! how such a client of our Blessed Lady, who has no self-seeking in his service of her, is agreeable

and precious in the eyes of God and of His holy Mother! But in these days how rare is such a sight! It is that it may be less rare that I have taken my pen to put on paper what I have taught, in public and in private, during my missions for many years.

I have now said many things about the most holy Virgin; but I have many more to say, and there are infinitely more which I shall omit, whether from ignorance, inability, or want of time, in the design which I have to form a true client of Mary, and a true disciple of Jesus Christ.

Oh! but my labor will have been well expended if this little Writing, falling into the hands of a soul of good dispositions, a soul well born, — born of God and of Mary, and not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, — should unfold to him, and should, by the grace of the Holy Ghost, inspire him with the excellence and the price of that true and solid devotion to our Blessed Lady, which I am going presently to describe. If I knew that my guilty blood could serve in engraving upon any one's heart the truths which I am writing in honor of my true Mother and sovereign Mistress, I would use my blood instead of ink to form the letters, in the hope to find

some good souls, who, by their fidelity to the practice which I teach, shall compensate to my dear Mother and Mistress for the losses which she has suffered through my ingratitude and infidelities. I feel myself more than ever animated to believe and to hope all which I have had deeply engraven upon my heart, and have asked of God these many years, namely, that sooner or later the Blessed Virgin shall have more children, servants, and slaves of love than ever; and that, by this means, Jesus Christ, my dear Master, shall reign more in hearts than ever.

Qui legit, intelligat. Qui potest capere, capiat, — "He who reads, let him understand. He who can receive it, let him receive it."

PART II.

ON THE MOST EXCELLENT DEVOTION TO OUR BLESSED LADY, OR THE PERFECT CONSECRATION TO JESUS BY MARY.

THERE are several interior practices of true devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Here are the principal of them stated compendiously. (1) To honor her as the worthy Mother of God, with the worship of hyperdulia; that is to say, to esteem her and honor her above all the other Saints, as the masterpiece of grace, and the first after Jesus Christ, true God and true Man; (2) to meditate her virtues, her privileges, and her actions; (3) to contemplate her grandeurs; (4) to make to her acts of love, of praise, of gratitude; (5) to invoke her cordially; (6) to offer ourselves to her, and unite ourselves with her; (7) to do all our actions with the view of pleasing her; (8) to begin, to continue, and to finish all our actions by her, in her, and with her, in order that we may do them by Jesus Christ, in Jesus Christ, with Jesus Christ, and for Jesus Christ, our Last End. We will presently explain this last practice.

And I loudly protest that, having read nearly all the books which profess to treat of devotion to our Lady, and having conversed familiarly and holily with the best and wisest of men of these latter times, I have never known nor heard of any practice of devotion towards her at all equal to this one which I wish now to unfold, — exacting from the soul as it does more sacrifices for God, emptying the soul more of itself and of its self-love, keeping it more faithfully in grace, and grace more faithfully in it, uniting it more perfectly and more easily to Jesus Christ, and finally, being more glorious to God, more sanctifying to the soul, and more useful to our neighbor, than any other of the devotions to her.

As the essential of this devotion consists in the interior which it ought to form, it will not be equally comprehended by everybody. Some will stop at what is exterior in it, and will go no further, and these will be the greatest number. Some, in small number, will enter into its inward spirit; but they will only mount but one step. Who will mount to the second step? Who will get as far as the third? Lastly, who will so advance as to make this devotion his habitual *state?* He alone to whom the spirit of Jesus Christ shall have revealed the secret,

the faultlessly faithful soul, whom He shall conduct there Himself, to advance from virtue to virtue, from grace to grace, from light to light, until he arrives at the transformation of himself into Jesus Christ, and to the plenitude of His age on earth, and of His glory in heaven.

I. IN WHAT CONSISTS THE PERFECT CONSECRATION TO JESUS CHRIST.

All our perfection consists in being conformed, united, and consecrated to Jesus Christ; and therefore the most perfect of all devotions is, without any doubt, that which the most perfectly conforms, unites, and consecrates us to Jesus Christ. Now, Mary being the most conformed of all creatures to Jesus Christ, it follows that of all devotions, that which most consecrates and conforms the soul to our Lord is devotion to His holy Mother, and that the more a soul is consecrated to Mary, the more is it consecrated to Jesus. Hence it comes to pass, that the most perfect consecration to Jesus Christ is nothing else but a perfect and entire consecration of ourselves to the Blessed Virgin, and this is the devotion which I teach; or in other words, a perfect renewal of the vows and promises of holy Baptism.

This devotion consists, then, in giving ourselves entirely and altogether to our Lady, in order to belong entirely and altogether to Jesus by her. We must give her (1) our body, with all its senses and its members; (2) our soul, with all its powers; (3) the exterior goods of fortune, whether present or to come; (4) our interior and spiritual goods, which are our merits and our virtues, and our good works, past, present, and future. In a word, we must give her all we have in the order of nature and in the order of grace, and all that may become ours in future in the orders of nature, grace, and glory; and this we must do without any reserve of so much as one farthing, one hair, or one least good action; and we must do it also for all eternity, and we must do it further without pretending to, or hoping for, any other recompense for our offering and service, except the honor of belonging to Jesus Christ by Mary and in Mary, even though that sweet Mistress were not, as she always is, the most generous and the most grateful of creatures.

Here we must remark, that there are two things in the good works which we do, namely, satisfaction and merit; in other words, their satisfactory or impetratory value and their meritorious value. The satisfactory or impe-

tratory value of a good work is the good action, so far as it satisfies for the pain due to sin, or obtains some fresh increase of grace; the meritorious value, or the merit, is the good action, so far as it merits grace now and eternal glory hereafter. Now, in this consecration of ourselves to our Lady, we give her all the satisfactory, impetratory, and meritorious value of our actions; in other words, the satisfactions and merits of all our good works. We give her all our merits, graces, and virtues, not to communicate them to others,—for our merits, graces, and virtues are, properly speaking, incommunicable, and it is only Jesus Christ, who, in making Himself our surety with His Father, is able to communicate His merits,—but we give her them to keep them, augment them, and embellish them for us, as we shall explain by and by. But we give her our satisfactions to communicate them to whom she likes, and for the greatest glory of God.

It follows from this, that (1) by this devotion, we give to Jesus Christ, in the most perfect manner, inasmuch as it is by Mary's hands, all we can give Him, and far more than by any other devotions, in which we give Him either part of our time, or a part of our good works, or a part of our satisfactions and mor-

tifications; whereas here everything is given and consecrated to Him, even to the right of disposing of our interior goods, and of the satisfactions which we gain by our good works daily. This is more than we do even in a religious order. In religious orders we give God the goods of fortune by the vow of poverty, the goods of the body by the vow of chastity, our own will by the vow of obedience, and sometimes the liberty of the body by the vow of cloister. But we do not by those vows give Him the liberty or the right to dispose of the value of our good works; and we do not strip ourselves, as far as a Christian man can do so, of that which is dearest and most precious to Him, namely, his merits and satisfactions.

2. A person who is thus voluntarily consecrated and sacrificed to Jesus Christ by Mary can no longer dispose of the value of any of his good actions. All he suffers, all he thinks, all the good he says or does, belongs to Mary, in order that she may dispose of it according to the will of her Son, and His greatest glory, without, however, that dependence prejudicing in any way the obligations of the state we may be in at present, or may be placed in for the future; for example, without prejudicing the obligations of a priest, who, by his office or

otherwise, ought to apply the satisfactory or impetratory value of the holy Mass to some private person; for we make the offering of this devotion only according to the order of God and the duties of our state.

3. We consecrate ourselves at one and the same time to the most holy Virgin and to Jesus Christ: to the most holy Virgin, as to the perfect means which Jesus Christ has chosen, whereby to unite Himself to us, and us to Him; and to our Lord, as to our Last End, to whom we owe all we are, as our Redeemer and our God.

I have said that this devotion may most justly be called a perfect renewal of the vows or promises of holy Baptism. For every Christian, before his Baptism, was the slave of the devil, seeing that he belonged to him. He has in his Baptism, by his own mouth or by his sponsor's, solemnly renounced Satan, his pomps and his works; and he has taken Jesus Christ for his Master and Sovereign Lord, to depend upon Him in the quality of a slave of love. This is what we do by the present devotion. We renounce, as is expressed in the formula of consecration, the devil, the world, sin, and self; and we give ourselves entirely to Jesus Christ by the hands of Mary. Nay,

we even do something more; for, in Baptism, we ordinarily speak by the mouth of another, namely, by our godfather or godmother, and so we give ourselves to Jesus Christ not by ourselves, but through another. But in this devotion we do it by ourselves, voluntarily, knowing what we are doing. Moreover, in holy Baptism we do not give ourselves to Jesus by the hands of Mary, at least not in an expressed manner; and we do not give Him the value of our good actions. We remain entirely free after Baptism, either to apply them to whom we please or to keep them for ourselves. But, by this devotion, we give ourselves to our Lord expressly by the hands of Mary, and we consecrate to Him the value of all our actions.

Men, says St. Thomas, make a vow at their Baptism to renounce the devil and all his pomps,—*In Baptismo vovent homines abrenuntiare diabolo et pompis ejus.* This vow, says St. Augustine, is the greatest and most indispensable of all vows,—*Votum maximum nostrum, quo vovimus nos in Christo esse mansuros.* It is thus also that canonists speak: *Præcipuum votum est, quod in Baptismate facimus,*—"The chief of vows is the one we make at Baptism." Yet who has kept this great vow? Who is it

that faithfully performs the promises of holy Baptism? Have not almost all Christians swerved from the loyalty which they promised Jesus in their Baptism? Whence can come this universal disobedience, except from our oblivion of the promises and engagements of holy Baptism, and from the fact that hardly any one ratifies of himself the contract he made with God by those who stood sponsors for him? This is so true, that the Council of Sens, convoked by order of Louis the Débonnaire to remedy the disorders of Christians, which were then so great, judged that the principal cause of that corruption of morals arose from the oblivion and ignorance in which men lived of the engagements of holy Baptism; and it could think of no better means for remedying so great an evil than to persuade Christians to renew the vows and promises of Baptism.

The Catechism of the Council of Trent, the faithful interpreter of that holy Council, exhorts the parish priests to do the same thing; and to induce the people to remember themselves, and to believe that they are bound and consecrated to our Lord Jesus Christ, as slaves to their Redeemer and Lord. These are its words: "*Parochus fidelem ad eam rationem cohortabitur ut*

sciat æquissimum esse . . . nos ipsos non secus ac mancipio Redemptori nostro ac Domino in perpetuum addicere et consecrare" (Cat. Conc. Trid. par. i., c. iii., sec. 4).

Now if the Councils, the Fathers, and experience even, show us that the best means of remedying the irregularities of Christians is by making them call to mind the obligations of their Baptism, and persuading them to renew now the vows they made then, does it not stand to reason that we shall do it in a perfect manner, by this devotion and consecration of ourselves to our Lord, through His holy Mother? I say in a perfect manner; because in thus consecrating ourselves to Him we make use of the most perfect of all means, namely, the Blessed Virgin.

No one can object to this devotion as either a new or an indifferent one. It is not new; because the Councils, the Fathers, and many authors both ancient and modern, speak of this consecration to our Lord, in renewing the vows and promises of Baptism, as of a thing anciently practised, and which they counsel to all Christians. Neither is it a matter of indifference; because the principal source of all disorders, and consequently of the eternal perdition of Christians, comes from their forgetfulness and

indifference about this practice. But some may object that this devotion, in making us give to our Lord by our Lady's hands the value of all our good works, prayers, mortifications, and alms, puts us into a state of incapacity for succoring the souls of our parents, friends, and benefactors.

I answer them as follows: 1. That it is not credible that our parents, friends, and benefactors should suffer any damage from the fact of our being devoted and consecrated without exception to the service of our Lord and His holy Mother. To think this, would be to think unworthily of the goodness and power of Jesus and Mary, who know well how to assist our parents, friends, and benefactors out of our own little spiritual revenue, or by other ways. 2. This practice does not hinder us from praying for others, whether dead or living, although the application of our good works depends on the will of our Blessed Lady. On the contrary, it is this very thing which will lead us to pray with more confidence; just as a rich person, who has given all his wealth to his prince, in order to honor him the more, would beg the prince all the more confidently to give an alms to one of his friends who should demand it. It would even be conferring a fresh favor on

the prince, and giving him a fresh pleasure, to give him an occasion of testifying his gratitude towards a person who stripped himself to clothe him, and who impoverished himself to honor him. We must say the same of our Blessed Lord and of our Lady. They will never let themselves be overcome in gratitude. Some one, perhaps, may say, If I give our Blessed Lady all the value of my actions to apply it to whom she wills, I shall have to suffer, perhaps, a long time in purgatory. This objection, which comes from self-love, and ignorance of the generosity of God and His holy Mother, demolishes itself. Will a fervent and generous soul, who prizes the interests of God more than his own; who gives God all he has, without reserve, so that he can do nothing more; who breathes only the glory and reign of Jesus Christ by His holy Mother, and who makes an entire sacrifice of himself to bring it about,—will this generous and liberal soul, I say, be more punished in the other world because it has been more liberal and more disinterested than others? Far, indeed, will that be from the truth! It is towards that soul, as we shall see, in conclusion, that our Lord and His holy Mother are most liberal in this world and in the other, in the orders of nature, grace and glory.

But we must now, as briefly as we can, run over the motives which ought to recommend this devotion to us, the marvellous effects it produces in the souls of the faithful, and its practices.

II. THE MOTIVES OF THIS PERFECT CONSECRATION.

First Motive, which shows us the excellence of this consecration of ourselves by the hands of Mary. If we can conceive on earth no employment more lofty than the service of God, —if the least servant of God is richer, more powerful, and more noble, than all the kings and emperors of earth, unless they also are the servants of God,—what must be the riches, the power, and the dignity, of the faithful and perfect servant of God, who is devoted to His service entirely and without reserve, to the utmost extent that is possible! Such is the faithful and loving slave of Jesus in Mary, who has given himself up utterly to the service of that King of kings, by the hands of His holy Mother, and has reserved nothing for himself. Not all the gold of earth, nor all the beauties of the heavens, can repay him.

This devotion makes us give to Jesus and

Mary, without reserve, all our thoughts, words, actions, and sufferings, all the times of our life, in such sort that whether we wake or sleep, whether we eat or drink, whether we do great actions or very little ones, it is always true to say that whatever we do, even without thinking of it, is by virtue of our offering, at least if it has not been expressly retracted, done for Jesus and Mary. What a consolation is this!

Moreover, as I have already said, there is no other practice equal to this for enabling us to get rid with facility of a certain proprietorship, which imperceptibly insinuates itself into our best actions. Our good Jesus gives us this great grace in recompense for the heroic and disinterested action of making a cession to Him, by the hands of His holy Mother, of all the value of our good works. If He gives a hundredfold even in this world to those who for His love quit outward and temporal and perishable goods, what will that hundredfold be which he will give to the man who sacrifices for Him even his inward and spiritual goods!

Jesus, our great friend, has given Himself to us without reserve, body and soul, virtues, graces, and merits. *Se toto totum me compa-*

ravit, said St. Bernard,—"He has bought the whole of me by the whole of Himself." Is it not, then, a simple matter of justice and of gratitude that we should give Him all that we can give Him? He has been the first to be liberal towards us; let us, at least, be the second; and then, in life and death, and throughout all eternity, we shall find Him still more liberal. *Cum liberali liberalis erit*,—"With the liberal He will be liberal."

The second Motive, which shows us how just it is in itself, and advantageous to Christians, to consecrate themselves entirely to the Blessed Virgin by this practice, in order to belong more perfectly to Jesus Christ.

This good Master has not disdained to shut Himself up in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, as a captive and as a loving slave, and to be subject and obedient to her for thirty years. It is here, I repeat it, that the human mind loses itself when it seriously reflects on the conduct of the Incarnate Wisdom, who has not willed, though He might have done so, to give Himself to men directly, but through the Blessed Virgin. He did not will to come into the world at the age of a perfect man, independent of others, but like a poor and little babe, dependent on the cares and nourish-

ment of this holy Mother. He is that Infinite Wisdom who had a boundless desire to glorify God His Father, and to save men; and yet He found no more perfect means, no shorter way to do it, than to submit Himself in all things to the Blessed Virgin, not only during the first eight, ten, or fifteen years of His life, like other children, but for thirty years! He gave more glory to God His Father during all that time of submission and dependence to our Blessed Lady than He would have given Him if He had employed those thirty years in working miracles, in preaching to the whole earth, and in converting all men, seeing that His heavenly Father and Himself had ruled it thus: *Quæ placita sunt ei, facio semper*,—"I always do the things which please Him." Oh! how highly we glorify God, when, after the example of Jesus, we submit ourselves to Mary!

Having, then, before our eyes an example so plain, and so well known to the whole world are we so senseless as to imagine that we can find a more perfect or a shorter means of glorifying God than that of submitting ourselves to Mary, after the example of her Son? Let us recall here, as a proof of the dependence we ought to have on our Blessed Lady, what I have said above in bringing forward the exam-

ple which the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost give of this dependence. The Father has not given, and does not give, His Son except by her; He has no children but by her, and communicates no graces but by her. God the Son has not been formed for the whole world in general except by her; and He is not daily formed and engendered except by her, in the union with the Holy Ghost; neither does He communicate His merits and His virtues except by her. The Holy Ghost has not formed Jesus Christ except by her; neither does He form the members of our Lord's Mystical Body except by her; and through her alone does He dispense His favors and His gifts. After so many and such pressing examples of the Most Holy Trinity, can we, without an extreme blindness, dispense ourselves from Mary, and not consecrate ourselves to her, and depend on her to go to God, and to sacrifice ourselves to God?

Here are some Latin passages of the Fathers, which I have chosen to prove what has just been said:

"Duo filii Mariæ sunt, homo Deus et homo purus, unius corporaliter, et alterius spiritualiter Mater est Maria" (St. Bonaventure and Origen).

"Hæc est voluntas Dei, qui totum nos voluit habere per Mariam, ac proinde si quid spei, si quid gratiæ, si quid salutis, ab ea noverimus redundare" (St. Bernard).

"Omnia dona, virtutes gratiæ ipsius Spiritus Sancti, quibus vult, et quandò vult, quomodò vult, et quantùm vult, per ipsius manus administrantur" (St. Bernardin).

"Quia indignus eras cui donaretur, datum est Mariæ, ut per illam acciperes quidquid haberes" (St. Bernard).

God, says St. Bernard, seeing that we are unworthy to receive His graces immediately from His own hand, gives them to Mary, in order that we may have through her whatever He wills to give us; and He also finds His glory in receiving through the hands of Mary the gratitude, respect, and love, which we owe Him for His benefits. It is most just, then, that we shall imitate this conduct of God, in order, as the same St. Bernard says, that the grace should return to its Author by the same canal through which it came: *Ut eodem alveo ad largitorem gratiæ gratia redeat, quo fluxit,*— "That grace should return to the giver of grace by the same channel through which it came."

This is precisely what our devotion does. We offer and consecrate all we are and all we

have to the Blessed Virgin, in order that our Lord may receive through her mediation the glory and the gratitude which we owe Him. We acknowledge ourselves unworthy and unfit to approach His Infinite Majesty by ourselves; and it is on this account that we avail ourselves of the intercession of the most holy Virgin.

Moreover, this devotion is a practice of great humility, which God loves above all the other virtues. A soul which exalts itself abases God; a soul which abases itself exalts God. God resists the proud, and gives His grace to the humble. If you abase yourself, thinking yourself unworthy to appear before Him and to draw nigh to Him, He descends, and lowers Himself to come to you, to take pleasure in you, and to exalt you in spite of yourself.

On the contrary, when you are hardy enough to approach God without a mediator, God flies from you, and you cannot reach Him. Oh, how He loves humility of heart! It is to this humility that our peculiar devotion engages us, because it teaches us never to draw nigh of ourselves to our Lord, however sweet and merciful He may be, but always to avail ourselves of the intercession of our Blessed Lady, whether it be to appear before God, or to speak to Him,

or to draw near to Him, or to offer Him anything, or to unite and consecrate ourselves to Him.

Third Motive. 1. The most holy Virgin, who is a Mother of sweetness and mercy, and who never lets herself be vanquished in love and liberality, seeing that we give ourselves entirely to her, to honor and to serve her, and for that end strip ourselves of all that is dearest to us in order to adorn her, meets us in the same spirit. She also gives her whole self, and gives it in an unspeakable manner, to him who gives all to her. She causes him to be engulfed in the abyss of her graces. She adorns him with her merits; she supports him with her power; she illuminates him with her light; she inflames him with her love; she communicates to him her virtues, her humility, her faith, her purity, and the rest. She makes herself his bail, his supplement, and his dear all towards Jesus. In a word, as that person is all consecrated to Mary, so is Mary all for him; after such a fashion that we can say of that perfect servant and child of Mary what St. John the Evangelist said of himself, that he took the holy Virgin for all his goods: *Accepit eam discipulus in sua*, — "The disciple took her for his own."

It is this which produces in the soul, if it is faithful, a great distrust, contempt, and hatred of self, and a great confidence and a great self-abandonment in the Blessed Virgin, its good Mistress. A man no longer, as before, leans on his own dispositions, intentions, merits, and good works; because, having made an entire sacrifice of them to Jesus Christ by that good Mother, he has but one treasure now, where all his goods are laid up, and that is no longer in himself; for his treasure is Mary. It is this which makes him approach our Lord without servile or scrupulous fear, and pray to Him with great confidence. It is this which makes him enter into the sentiments of the devout and learned Abbot Rupert, who, making an allusion to the victory that Jacob gained over the angel, said to our Blessed Lady these beautiful words: "O Mary! my Princess, Immaculate Mother of a God-man, Jesus Christ, I desire to wrestle with that man, namely the Divine Word, not armed with my own merits, but with yours." *O Domina, Dei genitrix Maria, et incorrupta Mater Dei et Hominis, non meis, sed tuis armatus meritis, cum isto Viro, seu Verbo Dei, luctari cupio* (Rup. *Prolog. in Cantic.*).

Oh, how strong and mighty we are with Jesus Christ, when we are armed with the wor-

thy merits and intercession of the Mother of God, who, as St. Augustine says, has lovingly vanquished the Most High.

2. As by this practice we give to our Lord by His Mother's hands all our good works, that good Mother purifies them, embellishes them, and makes them acceptable to her Son.

(1) She purifies them of all the soil of self-love, and of that imperceptible attachment to the creature, which slips incessantly into our best actions. As soon as they are in her most pure and fruitful hands, those same hands, which have never been sullied or idle, and which purify whatever they touch, take away from the present which we make to her all that was spoilt or imperfect about it.

(2) She embellishes our works, in adorning them with her own merits and virtues. It is as if a peasant, wishing to gain the friendship and benevolence of the king, went to the queen, and presented her with a fruit, which was his whole revenue, in order that she might present it to the king. The queen, having accepted the poor little offering from the peasant, would place the fruit on a large and beautiful dish of gold, and so, on the peasant's behalf, would present it to the king. Then the fruit, however unworthy in itself to be a

king's present, would become worthy of his majesty, because of the dish of gold on which it rested and the person who presented it.

(3) She presents these good works to Jesus Christ; for she keeps nothing of what is given for herself, as if she was our last end. She refers it all faithfully to Jesus. If we give to her, we give necessarily to Jesus. If we praise her or glorify her, we at once praise and glorify Jesus. As of old, when St. Elizabeth praised her, so now, when we praise and bless her, she sings herself, *Magnificat anima mea Dominum*, —"My soul doth magnify the Lord."

(4) She persuades Jesus to accept these good works, however little and poor the present may be for that Saint of saints and that King of kings. When we present anything to Jesus by ourselves and relying on our own industry and disposition, Jesus examines the offering, and often rejects it because of the stains it has contracted through self-love; just as of old He rejected the sacrifices of the Jews when they were full of their own will. But when we present Him anything by the pure and virginal hands of his Well-beloved, we take Him by His weak side, if it is allowable to use such a term. He does not consider so much the thing that is given Him, as the Mother

who gives it. He does not consider so much whence the offering comes, as by whom it comes. Thus Mary, who is never repelled and always well received by her Son, makes everything she presents to Him, great or small, acceptable to His Majesty. For Jesus to receive it and to take complacence in it, it is enough that Mary should present it. This is the great counsel which St. Bernard used to give to those whom he conducted to perfection: "When you want to offer anything to God, take care to offer it by the most agreeable and worthy hands of Mary, unless you wish to have it rejected," — *Modicum quod offerre desideras manibus Mariæ offerendum tradere cura, si non vis sustinere repulsam.*

Fourth Motive. This devotion, faithfully practised, is an excellent means of making sure that the value of all our good works shall be employed for the greatest glory of God. Scarcely any one acts for that noble end, although we are all under an obligation to do so. Either we do not know where the greatest glory of God is to be found, or we do not wish to find it. But our Blessed Lady, to whom we cede the value and the merit of the good works we may do, knows most perfectly where the greatest glory of God is to be found;

and, inasmuch as she never does anything except for the greatest glory of God, a perfect servant of that good Mistress, who is wholly consecrated to her, may say with the hardiest assurance, that the value of all his actions, thoughts, and words, is employed for the greatest glory of God, at least unless he expressly revokes his offering. Is there any consolation equal to this, for a soul who loves God with a pure and disinterested love, and who prizes the glory and interests of God far beyond his own?

Fifth Motive. This devotion is an *easy*, *short*, *perfect*, and *secure* way of arriving at union with our Lord, in which the perfection of a Christian consists.

1. It is an *easy* way. It is the way which Jesus Christ Himself trod in coming to us, and in which there is no obstacle in arriving at Him. It is true that we can attain to divine union by other roads; but it is by many more crosses, and strange deaths, and with many more difficulties, which we shall find it hard to overcome. We must pass through obscure nights, through combats, through strange agonies, over craggy mountains, through cruel thorns, and over frightful deserts. But, by the path of Mary, we pass more gently and more

tranquilly. We do find, it is true, great battles to fight, and great hardships to master; but that good Mother and Mistress makes herself so present and so near to her faithful servants, to enlighten them in their darknesses and their doubts, to strengthen them in their fears, and to sustain them in their struggles and their difficulties, that in truth this virginal path to find Jesus Christ is a path of roses and honey compared with the other paths. There have been some Saints, but they have been in small numbers, who have passed by this sweet path to go to Jesus, because the Holy Ghost, faithful Spouse of Mary, has by a singular grace disclosed it to them. Such were St. Ephrem, St. John Damascene, St. Bernard, St. Bernardine, St. Bonaventure, St. Francis of Sales, and others. But the rest of the Saints, who are the greater number, although they have all had devotion to our Blessed Lady, have not on that account, or at least very little, entered upon this way. This is why they have had to pass through ruder and more dangerous trials.

2. This devotion to the Blessed Virgin is a *short* road to find Jesus Christ, both because it is a road which we do not stray from, and because, as I have just said, it is a road we tread with joy and facility, and by consequence with

promptitude. We make more progress in a brief period of submission to, and dependence on, Mary than in whole years of our own will, and of resting upon ourselves. A man obedient and submissive to Mary shall sing the signal victories which he shall gain over his enemies. They will try to hinder his advancing, or to make him retrace his steps, or to fall. This is true. But with the support, the aid, and the guidance of Mary, without falling, without drawing back one step, without even slackening his pace, he shall advance with giant strides towards Jesus, along the same path by which he knows that Jesus also came to us with giant strides, and in the briefest space of time. Why do you think that Jesus lived so short a time on earth, and of those few years spent nearly all of them in subjection and obedience to His Mother? Ah, this is the truth: that He was perfected indeed in a short time, but that He lived a long time, longer than Adam, whose fall He had come to repair, although the patriarch lived above nine hundred years. Jesus Christ lived a long time because He lived in complete subjection to His holy Mother, and closely united with her, in order that He might thus obey God His Father. For the Holy Ghost says that a man who

honors his mother is like a man who layeth up a treasure ; that is to say, he who honors Mary his Mother, up to the point of subjecting himself to her and obeying her in all things, will soon become exceedingly rich, (1) because he is every day amassing treasures, by the secret of that philosopher's stone : *Qui honorat matrem quasi qui thesaurizat*, — " He who honors his mother is as one who lays up a treasure ; " (2) because it is the bosom of Mary which has surrounded and engendered a perfect man, and has had the capacity of containing Him whom the whole universe could neither contain nor comprehend, — it is, I say, in the bosom of Mary that they who are youthful become elders in light, in holiness, in experience, and in wisdom ; and that we arrive in a few years at the fulness of the age of Jesus Christ.

3. This practice of devotion to our Blessed Lady is also a *perfect* path by which to go and unite ourselves to Jesus, because the divine Mary is the most perfect and the most holy of creatures, and because Jesus, who has come to us most perfectly, took no other road for His great and admirable journey. The Most High, the Incomprehensible, the Inaccessible, He Who Is, has deigned to come to us, little worms of earth who are nothing. How has

He done this? The Most High has come down to us perfectly and divinely by the humble Mary. He has come down to us by her, without losing anything of His divinity and sanctity. So it is by Mary that the unspeakably little are to ascend, perfectly and divinely, without any fear, to the Most High. The Incomprehensible has allowed Himself to be comprehended and perfectly contained by the little Mary, without losing anything of His Immensity. So also is it by the little Mary that we must let ourselves be held and guided perfectly without any reserve. The Inaccessible has drawn near to us, and has closely united Himself to us, perfectly, and even personally, to our humanity, by Mary, without losing any of His Majesty. So also is it by Mary that we must draw near to God, and unite ourselves perfectly and closely to His Majesty, without fear of being repulsed. In a word, He Who Is has deigned to come to that which is not, and to make that which is not become God in Him Who Is; and He has done this perfectly in giving Himself and subjecting Himself entirely to the young Virgin Mary without ceasing to be in time He who is eternal. In like manner it is by Mary that we, who are nothing, can become like to

God by grace and glory, by giving ourselves to her so perfectly and entirely as to be nothing in ourselves but everything in her, without fear of delusion.

Make for me, if you will, a new road to go to Jesus, and pave it with all the merits of the Blessed, adorn it with all their heroic virtues, illuminate and embellish it with all the lights and beauties of the Angels, and let all the Angels and Saints be there themselves to escort, defend, and sustain those who are ready to walk there; and yet in truth, in simple truth, I say boldly, and I repeat that I say truly, I would prefer to this new perfect path the immaculate way of Mary. *Posui immaculatam viam meam.* It is the way without any stain or spot, without original or actual sin, without shadow or darkness. When my sweet Jesus in His glory comes a second time on earth, as it is most certain He will do, to reign there, He will choose no other way for His journey than the divine Mary, by whom He came the first time so surely and so perfectly. But there will be a difference between His first and His last coming. The first time He came secretly and hiddenly; the second time He will come gloriously and resplendently. But both times He will come perfectly, because

both times He will come by Mary. Alas, here is a mystery which is not understood. *Hic taceat omnis lingua*,—"Here let all tongues be mute."

This devotion is a secure means of going to Jesus Christ, because it is the very characteristic of our Blessed Lady to conduct us surely to Jesus, just as it is the very characteristic of Jesus to conduct us surely to the Eternal Father. Spiritual persons, therefore, must not fall into the false belief that Mary can be a hindrance to them in attaining to divine union; for is it possible that she who has found grace before God for the whole world in general, and for each one in particular, should be a hindrance to a soul in finding the great grace of union with Him? Can it be possible that she who has been all full and superabounding with graces, so united and transformed into God that it has been a kind of necessity that He should be incarnate in her, should be a stumbling-block in the way of a soul's perfect union with God? It is quite true that the view of other creatures, however holy, may perhaps at certain times retard divine union. But this cannot be said of Mary, as I have remarked before, and shall never weary of repeating. One reason why so few

souls come to the fulness of the age of Jesus Christ is because Mary, who is as much as ever the Mother of the Son, and as much as ever the fruitful Spouse of the Holy Ghost, is not sufficiently formed in their hearts. He who wishes to have the fruit well ripened and well formed must have the tree that produces it; he who wishes to have the fruit of life, Jesus Christ, must have the tree of life, which is Mary; he who wishes to have in himself the operation of the Holy Ghost must have His faithful and indissoluble Spouse, the immaculate Mary, who makes Him fertile and fruit-bearing, as we have said elsewhere.

Be persuaded, then, that the more you look at Mary in your prayers, contemplations, actions, and sufferings, if not with a distinct and definite view at least with a general and imperceptible one, the more perfectly will you find Jesus Christ, who is always with Mary, great, powerful, operative, and incomprehensible.

Thus, so far from the divine Mary, all absorbed in God, being an obstacle to the perfect in their attaining to union with God, there has never been up to this point, and there never will be, any creature who will aid us more efficaciously in this great work, whether

by the graces she will communicate to us for this effect,—for, as a Saint has said, no one can be filled with the thought of God except by her, *Nemo cogitatione Dei repletur, nisi per te,*—or whether by freedom from the illusions and trickeries of the evil spirit, which she will guarantee to us.

Where Mary is, there the evil spirit is not. One of the most infallible marks we can have of our being conducted by the good Spirit is our being very devout to Mary, our thinking often of her, and our speaking often of her.

This last is the thought of a Saint, who adds, that as respiration is a certain sign the body is not dead, the frequent thought and loving invocation of Mary is a certain sign the soul is not dead by sin.

As it is Mary alone, says the Church (and the Holy Ghost, who guides the Church), who alone makes all heresies come to naught (*Sola cunctas hæreses interemisti in universo mundo,*—"Thou alone hast destroyed all heresies in the whole world"), we may be sure that, however critics may grumble, no faithful client of Mary will ever fall into heresy or illusion, at least formal. He may very well err materially, take falsehood for truth, and the evil spirit for the

good; and yet he will do even this with more difficulty than others. But sooner or later he will acknowledge his material fault and error; and when he knows it he will not be in any way self-opinionated in believing and maintaining what he had once thought true. Whoever, then, wishes to put aside the fear of illusion, which is the besetting timidity of men of prayer, and to advance in the way of perfection, and surely and perfectly to find Jesus Christ, let him embrace with great-heartedness (*corde magno et animo volenti*,—"with a great heart and a willing mind") this devotion to our Blessed Lady, which perhaps he has not known before; let him enter into this excellent way, which was unknown to him, and which I now point out: *Excellentiorem viam vobis demonstro*, —"I show you a more excellent way."

It is a path trodden by Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Wisdom, our sole Head. One of His members in passing by the same road cannot deceive himself. It is an *easy* road, because of the fulness of the grace and unction of the Holy Ghost, which fills it to overflowing. No one wearies there; no one walking there has ever to retrace his steps. It is a *short* road, which leads us to Jesus in a little time. It is a *perfect* road, where there is no mud, no dust,

nor the least spot of sin. Lastly, it is a *secure* road, which conducts us to Jesus Christ and life eternal in a straight and secure manner, without turning to the right hand or to the left. Let us, then, set forth upon that road, and walk there day and night, until we come to the fulness of the age of Jesus Christ.

Sixth Motive. This practice of devotion gives to those who make use of it faithfully a great interior liberty, which is the liberty of the children of God. For, as by this devotion we make ourselves slaves of Jesus Christ, and consecrate ourselves entirely to Him in this capacity, our Good Master, in recompense for the loving captivity in which we put ourselves, (1) takes all scruple and servile fear from the soul, with everything that is capable of contracting, imprisoning, or confusing it; (2) He enlarges the heart by a firm confidence in God, making it look at Him as a Father; and (3) He inspires us with a tender and filial love.

Seventh Motive. Another consideration which may engage us to embrace this practice is that of the great good which our neighbor will receive from it. For by this practice we exercise charity towards him in an eminent manner, seeing that we give him by Mary's hands all that is most precious to ourselves, — which is the

satisfactory and impetratory value of all our good works, without excepting the least good thought, or the least little suffering. We agree that all the satisfactions we may have acquired, or may acquire up to the moment of our death, should be employed at our Lady's will either for the conversion of sinners, or for the deliverance of souls from Purgatory.

Is not this to love our neighbor perfectly? Is not this to be the true disciple of Jesus Christ, who is always to be recognized by his charity? Is not this the way to convert sinners, without any fear of vanity; and to deliver souls from Purgatory, without scarcely doing anything but what we are obliged to do by our state of life?

To understand the excellence of this motive, we must understand also what a good it is to convert a sinner, or to deliver a soul from Purgatory. It is an infinite good, which is greater than to create heaven and earth, because we give to a soul the possession of God. If by this practice we deliver but one soul in our life from Purgatory, or convert but one sinner, would not that be enough to induce a truly charitable man to embrace it? But we must remark that, inasmuch as our good works pass through the hands of Mary, they receive an

augmentation of purity, and consequently of merit, and of satisfactory and impetratory value. On this account they become more capable of solacing the souls in Purgatory and of converting sinners than if they did not pass by the virginal and liberal hands of Mary. It may be little that we give by our Lady; but, in truth, if it is given with a disinterested charity, that little becomes very mighty to turn the wrath of God, and to attract His mercy. It would be no wonder if, at the hour of death, it should be found that a person faithful to this practice shall, by the means of it, have delivered many souls from Purgatory, and converted many sinners, though he shall have done nothing more than the ordinary actions of his state of life. What joy at his judgment! What glory in his eternity!

Eighth Motive. Lastly, that which in some sense most persuasively engages us to this devotion to our Lady is, that it is an admirable means of persevering and being faithful in virtue. Whence comes it that the majority of the conversions of sinners are not durable? Whence comes it that we relapse so easily into sin? Whence comes it that the greater part of the just, instead of advancing from virtue to virtue and acquiring new graces, often lose

the little virtue and the little grace they have? This misfortune comes, as I have shown before, from the fact that man is at once so corrupt, so feeble, and so inconstant, and yet trusts to himself, leans on his own strength, and believes himself capable of guarding the treasure of his graces, of his virtues and merits. On the other hand, by this devotion we confide all we possess to the Blessed Virgin, who is faithful; we take her for the universal depositary of all our goods of nature and of grace. It is to her fidelity that we trust them. It is on her power that we lean. It is on her mercy and charity that we build, in order that she may preserve and augment our virtues and merits, in spite of the devil, the world, and the flesh, who put forth all their efforts to take them from us.

Poor children of Mary, your weakness is extreme, your inconstancy is great, your inward nature is thoroughly corrupted, you are drawn (I grant it) from the same corrupt mass as all the children of Adam and Eve. Yet do not be discouraged on that account. Console yourselves, and exult in having the secret which I teach you, — *a secret unknown to almost all Christians, even the most devout.* Leave not your gold and silver in your cof-

fers, which have been already broken open by the evil spirits, who have robbed you. Those coffers are too little, too weak, too old, to hold a treasure so precious and so great. Put not the pure and clear water of the fountain into your vessels, all spoilt and infected by sin. If the sin is there no longer, at least the odor of it is, and so the water will be spoilt. Put not your exquisite wines into your old casks, which have had bad wine in them; else even these wines will be spoilt, and perhaps break the casks, and be spilled upon the ground.

Though you, predestinate souls, understand me well enough, I will speak yet more openly. Trust not the gold of your charity, the silver of your purity, the waters of your heavenly graces nor the wines of your merits and virtues to a torn sack, an old and broken coffer, a spoilt and corrupted vessel, like yourselves; else you will be stripped by the robbers, — that is to say, the demons, — who are seeking and watching night and day for the right time to do it; and you will infect, by your own bad odor of self-love, self-confidence, and self-will, every most pure thing which God has given you. Pour, pour into the bosom and the heart of Mary all your treasures, all your graces, all your virtues. She is a spiritual vessel, she is

a vessel of honor, she is a marvellous vessel of devotion, — *Vas spirituale, vas honorabile, vas insigne devotionis.*

Since God Himself has been shut up in person, with all His perfections, in the bosom of Mary, she has become altogether spiritual, and the spiritual abode of the most spiritual souls. She has become honorable, and the throne of honor for the grandest princes of eternity. She has become wonderful in devotion, and a dwelling the most illustrious for sweetness, for graces, and for virtues. She has become rich as a house of gold, strong as a tower of David, and pure as a tower of ivory. Oh! how happy is the man who has given everything to Mary, and has trusted himself to Mary in everything and for everything! He belongs all to Mary, and Mary belongs all to him. He can say boldly with David, *Hæc facta est mihi*, — "Mary is made for me;" or with the beloved disciple, *Accepi eam in mea*, — "I have taken her for all my goods;" or with Jesus Christ, *Omnia mea tua sunt, et omnia tua mea sunt*, — "All that I have is thine, and all that thou hast is mine."

Of all the truths which I have been putting forward with regard to our Blessed Lady and her children and servants, the Holy Ghost gives us an admirable figure in the Scriptures.

It is in the history of Jacob, who received the benediction of his father Isaac, by the skill and pains of Rebecca, his mother.

Isaac, about to die, calls Esau, saying to him, "Prepare something for me to eat, that I may bless thee before I die." Rebecca hears the design of her husband, calls her favorite boy Jacob, bids him go quickly and bring two kids that she may cook them, as she knew Isaac would like, and give them to Jacob to present to his father and get the blessing instead of Esau. Jacob hesitates, the mother insists, Jacob alleges that he is smooth skinned, whereas Esau is covered with hair. "Leave that with me," said the mother, "I shall clothe your hands and neck with the skins of the kids, — clothe you with new garments. You will get the double blessing. Jacob obeys, and gets the double blessing—the blessing of spiritual and temporal goods.

This teaches us what our good Mother does for her devoted sons and daughters. She kills the kids, that is, she destroys our evil propensities. She makes of these kids a pleasing offering to our Father, that is, she changes our desires from gross and sensual objects to heavenly joys. She makes our actions an acceptable offering to our Heavenly Father

by clothing them with her own merits. She clothes us with new garments by clothing us with the merits of her Son, which He has left at her disposal. She obtains for us the double blessing, that is, the blessing of heavenly graces and wonderful riches. But that is not all. In return for the generous giving up of all to her, she supplies our wants by lovingly providing for even our temporal necessities.

The reprobate tell loudly enough that they love Jesus, and that they love and honor Mary; but it is not with their substance, it is not up to the point of sacrificing to them their body with its senses, their soul with its passions, as the predestinate do. These last are subject and obedient to our Blessed Lady, as to their good Mother; after the example of Jesus Christ, who, of the three-and-thirty years He lived on earth, employed thirty to glorify God His Father, by a perfect and entire subjection to His holy Mother.

She kills and mortifies, it is true, all that is impure and imperfect in them, but she neither loses nor dissipates one atom of the good which grace has done there. On the contrary, she preserves and augments it, to make it the ornament and the strength of their neck and their hands; that is to say, to fortify them, and

to help them to carry the yoke of the Lord, which is worn upon the neck, and to work great things for the glory of God, and the salvation of their poor brethren.

Another favor which our Lady does to her servants is, that she conducts and directs them according to the will of her Son. Rebecca guided her little Jacob, and gave him good advice from time to time; either to draw upon himself the blessing of his father, or to avert from himself the hatred and persecution of his brother Esau. Mary who is the Star of the Sea, leads all her faithful servants to a good port. She shows them the paths of eternal life. She makes them avoid the dangerous places. She conducts them by her hand along the paths of justice. She steadies them when they are about to fall; she lifts them up when they have fallen. She reproves them like a charitable mother when they fail; and sometimes she even lovingly chastises them. Can a child obedient to Mary, his foster-mother and his enlightened guide, go astray in the paths of eternity? *Ipsam sequens non devias*, — "If you follow her," says St. Bernard, "you cannot wander from the road." Fear not, therefore, that a true child of Mary can be deceived by the evil one, or fall into any formal

heresy. There where the guidance of Mary is, neither the evil spirit with his illusions, nor the heretics with their subtleties, can ever come, — *Ipsâ tenente, non corruis.*

Rebecca, by her cares and artifices, delivered Jacob from all the dangers in which he found himself, and particularly from the death which his brother Esau would have inflicted on him, because of the envy and hatred which he bore him; as Cain did of old to his brother Abel. Mary, the good Mother of the predestinate, hides her faithful servants under the wings of her protection, as a hen hides her chickens. She speaks, she humbles herself she condescends to all their weaknesses, to secure them from the hawk and the vulture. She puts herself round about them, and she accompanies them, like an army in battle array, *ut castrorum acies ordinata.* Shall a man, who has an army of a hundred thousand soldiers around him, fear his enemies? A faithful servant of Mary, surrounded by her protection and her imperial power, has still less to fear. This good Mother and powerful princess of the heavens would rather despatch battalions of millions of angels to succor one of her servants than that it should ever be said that a faithful servant of Mary, who trusted

in her, had had to succumb to the malice, the number, and the vehemence of his enemies.

Lastly, and the greatest good which the sweet Mary procures for her faithful clients is, to intercede for them with her Son, and to appease Him by her prayers. She unites them to Him with a most intimate union, and she keeps them unshaken in that union.

Rebecca made Jacob come near to his father's bed. The good man touched him, embraced him, and even kissed him with joy, being content and satisfied with the well-dressed viands which he had brought him; and having smelt with much contentment the exquisite perfume of his garments, he cried out, *Ecce odor filii mei sicut odor agri pleni, cui benedixit Dominus*, — "Behold the odor of my son, which is like the odor of a full field that the Lord hath blest." This odor of the full field which charms the heart of the Father is nothing else than the odor of the virtues and merits of Mary, who is a field full of grace, where God the Father has sown His only Son, as a grain of the wheat of the elect. Oh, how a child, perfumed with the good odor of Mary, is welcome with Jesus Christ, who is the Father of the world to come! Oh, how promptly and how perfectly is such a child united to his

Lord! But we have shown this at length already.

Furthermore, after Mary has heaped her favors upon her children and faithful servants, and has obtained for them the benediction of her Heavenly Father, and union with Jesus Christ, she preserves them in Jesus, and Jesus in them. She takes care of them, watches over them always, for fear they should lose the grace of God, and fall back into the snares of their enemies. *In plenitudine detinet*, — she detains the Saints in their fulness, and makes them persevere to the end, as we have seen.

This is the interpretation of [the history of Jacob and Esau] that great and ancient figure of predestination and reprobation, so unknown, and so full of mysteries.

THE WONDERFUL EFFECTS WHICH THIS DEVOTION PRODUCES IN THE SOUL WHICH IS FAITHFUL TO IT.

My dear brother, be sure that, if you are faithful to the interior and exterior practices of this devotion, which I will point out, the following effects will take place in your soul:

1. By the light which the Holy Ghost will give you by His dear Spouse, Mary, you will

understand your own evil, your corruption, and your incapacity for anything good, which is not God's free gift to us, either as Author of nature or of grace. In consequence of this knowledge, you will despise yourself. You will only think of yourself with horror. You will regard yourself as a snail, that spoils everything with its slime; or a toad, that poisons everything with its venom; or as a spiteful serpent, only seeking to deceive. In other words, the humble Mary will communicate to you a portion of her profound humility, which will make you despise yourself, despise nobody else, but love to be despised yourself.

2. Our Blessed Lady will give you also a portion of her faith, which was the greatest of all faiths that ever were on earth, greater than the faith of all the Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, and Saints put together. Now that she is reigning in the heavens, she has no longer this faith, because she sees all things clearly in God by the light of glory. Nevertheless, with the consent of the Most High, in entering into glory she has not lost her faith. She has kept it, in order that she may keep it in the Church Militant for her faithful servants. The more, then, you gain the favor of that august Princess and faithful Virgin, the more will you go by pure

faith in all your conduct; a pure faith which will make you hardly care at all about the sensible and the extraordinary; a lively faith animated by charity, which will enable you to perform all your actions from the motive of pure love; a faith firm and immovable as a rock, through which you will rest quiet and constant in the midst of storms and hurricanes; a faith active and piercing, which, like a mysterious pass-key, will give you entrance into all the mysteries of Jesus, into the Last End of man, and into the Heart of God Himself; a courageous faith, which will enable you to undertake and carry out without hesitation great things for God and for the salvation of souls; lastly, a faith which will be your blazing torch, your divine life, your hidden treasure of divine wisdom, and your omnipotent arm, which you will use to enlighten those who are in the darkness of the shadow of death, to inflame those who are lukewarm and who have need of the heated gold of charity, to give life to those who are dead in sin, to teach and overthrow, by your meek and powerful words, the hearts of marble and the cedars of Lebanon, and finally, to resist the devil and all the enemies of salvation.

3. This Mother of fair love will take away from your heart all scruple and all disorder of

servile fear. She will open and enlarge it to run the way of her Son's commandments with the holy liberty of the children of God. She will introduce into it pure love, of which she has the treasure; so that you shall no longer be guided by fear, as hitherto, in your dealings with the God of charity, but by pure love. You will look on Him as your good Father, whom you will be incessantly trying to please, and with whom you will converse confidently, as a child with its tender father. If unfortunately you offend Him, you will at once humble yourself before Him. You will ask His pardon with great lowliness, but at the same time you will stretch your hand out to Him with simplicity and you will raise yourself up lovingly, without trouble or disquietude, and go on your way to Him without discouragement.

4. Our Blessed Lady will fill you with a great confidence in God and in herself: (1) because you will not be approaching to Jesus by yourself, but always by that good Mother; (2) because, as you have given her all your merits, graces, and satisfactions, to dispose of at her will, she will communicate to you her virtues, and will clothe you in her merits, so that you will be able to say to God with confidence, "Behold Mary Thy handmaid; be it done unto

me according to Thy word," — *Ecce ancilla Domini, fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum;* (3) because, as you have given yourself entirely to her, body and soul, she, who is liberal with the liberal, and more liberal even than the liberal, will in return give herself to you in a marvellous but real manner, so that you may say to her with assurance, *Tuus sum ego, salvum me fac,* — "I am thine, holy Virgin; save me:" or, as I have said before with the Beloved Disciple, *Accepi te in mea,* — "I have taken thee, holy Mother, for all my goods." You may also say with St. Bonaventure, *Ecce, Domina, salvatrix mea, fiducialiter agam et non timebo, quia fortitudo mea, et laus mea in Domino es tu;* and in another place, *Tuus totus ego sum, et omnia mea tua sunt; O virgo gloriosa, super omnia benedicta, ponam te ut signaculum super cor meum, quia fortis est ut mors dilectio tua.* "My dear Mistress, who saves me, I will have confidence and will not fear, because you are my strength and my praise in the Lord. . . . I am altogether yours, and all that I have belongs to you! O glorious Virgin, blessed above all created things! I will put you as a seal upon my heart, because your love is as strong as death."

You may say to God, in the sentiments of the prophet, *Domine, non est exaltatum cor meum,*

neque elati sunt oculi mei; neque ambulavi in magnis, neque in mirabilibus super me, si non humiliter sentiebam; sed exaltavi animam meam: sicut ablactatus est super matre tua, ita retributio in anima mea,—" Lord, my heart and my eyes have no right to extol themselves, or to be proud, or to seek great and wonderful things. Yet even in this I am not humble; but I have lifted up and encouraged my soul by confidence; I am like a child, weaned from the pleasures of earth, and resting on its mother's lap; and it is on that lap that all good things come to me." (See Psalm cxxx.) (4) What will still further increase your confidence in her is, that you will have less confidence in yourself. You have given her, in trust, all you have of good about you, that she may have it and keep it; and so all the trust you once had in yourself has become an increase of confidence in her, who is your treasure. Oh, what confidence and what consolation is this for a soul, who can say that the treasure of God, where He has been pleased to put all He had most precious, is his own treasure also! *Ipsa est thesaurus Domini.* It was a Saint who said she was the treasure of the Lord.

5. The soul of our Blessed Lady will communicate itself to you, to glorify the Lord.

Her spirit will enter into the place of yours, to rejoice in God her salvation, provided only that you are faithful to the practices of this devotion. *Sit in singulis anima Mariæ, ut magnificet Dominum: sit in singulis spiritus Mariæ, ut exultet in Deo* (St. Ambrose),—"Let the soul of Mary be in each of us to glorify the Lord: let the spirit of Mary be in each of us to rejoice in God." Ah! when will the happy time come, said a holy man of our own days, who was all absorbed in Mary,—ah! when will the happy time come, when the divine Mary will be established mistress and queen of hearts, in order that she may subject them fully to the empire of her great and holy Jesus? When will souls breathe Mary, as the body breathes air? When that time comes, wonderful things will happen in those lowly places, where the Holy Ghost, finding His dear Spouse, as it were, reproduced in souls, shall come in with abundance, and fill them full to overflowing with His gifts, and particularly with the gift of wisdom, to work the miracles of grace. My dear brother, when will that happy time, that age of Mary, come, when souls, losing themselves in the abyss of her interior, shall become living copies of Mary, to love and glorify Jesus? That time will not come until men

shall know and practice this devotion which I am teaching. *Ut adveniat regnum tuum, adveniat regnum Mariæ.*

6. If Mary, who is the tree of life, is well cultivated in our soul by fidelity to the practices of this devotion, she will bear her fruit in her own time, and her fruit is none other than Jesus Christ. How many devout souls do I see who seek Jesus Christ, some by one way or by one practice, and others by other ways and other practices; and after they have toiled much throughout the night, they say, *Per totam noctem laborantes nihil cepimus*,—"We have toiled all night, and have taken nothing!" We may say to them, *Laborastis multum, et intulistis parum*,—"You have labored much, and gained little:" Jesus Christ is yet feeble in you. But by that immaculate way of Mary, and that divine practice which I am teaching, we toil during the day; we toil in a holy place; we toil but little. There is no night in Mary, because there is no sin, nor even the slightest shade. Mary is a holy place, and the holy of holies where Saints are formed and moulded. Take notice, if you please, that I say the Saints are moulded in Mary. There is a great difference between making a figure in relief by blows of hammer and chisel, and

making a figure by throwing it into a mould. Statuaries and sculptors labor much to make figures in the first manner; but to make them in the second manner they work little, and do their work quickly.

St. Augustine calls our Blessed Lady *forma Dei*,—"the mould of God:" *Si formam Dei te appellem, digna existis*,—"The mould fit to cast and mould gods." He who is cast in this mould is presently formed and moulded in Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ in him. At a slight expense and in a short time he will become God, because he has been cast in the same mould which has formed a God.

It seems to me that I can very aptly compare directors and devout persons, who wish to form Jesus Christ in themselves or others by different practices from this, to sculptors who trust in their own professional skill, ingenuity, or art, and so give an infinity of hammerings and chisellings to a hard stone or a piece of badly polished wood, to make an image of Jesus Christ out of it. Sometimes they do not succeed in giving anything like the natural expression of Jesus, either from having no knowledge or experience of the Person of Jesus, or from some blow awkwardly given, which has spoiled the work. But for

those who embrace the secret of grace which I am revealing to them, I may reasonably compare them to founders and casters, who have discovered the beautiful mould of Mary, where Jesus was naturally and divinely formed; and without trusting to their own skill, but only in the goodness of the mould, they cast themselves and lose themselves in Mary, to become the portraits of Jesus Christ after nature.

Oh, beautiful and true comparison! but who will comprehend it? I desire that you may, my dear brother. But remember that we only cast in a mould what is melted and liquid; that is to say, you must destroy and melt down in yourself the old Adam to become the new one in Mary.

7. By this practice, faithfully observed, you will give Jesus more glory in a month than by any other practice, however difficult, in many years; and I give the following reasons for it.

(1) Because, doing your actions by our Blessed Lady, as this practice teaches you, you abandon your own intentions and operations, although good and known, to lose yourself, so to speak, in the intentions of the Blessed Virgin, although they are unknown. Thus you enter by participation into the sub-

limity of her intentions, which are so pure that she gives more glory to God by the least of her actions — for example, in twirling her distaff or pointing her needle — than St. Lawrence by his cruel martyrdom on his gridiron, or even all the Saints by all their heroic actions put together. It was thus that, during her sojourn here below, she acquired such an unspeakable aggregate of graces and merits, that t were easier to count the stars of the firmaent, the drops of water in the sea, or the grains of sand upon its shore, than her merits and graces. Thus it was that she gave more glory to God than all the Angels and Saints have given Him, or ever will give Him. O prodigy of a Mary! thou canst not help but do prodigies of grace in souls that wish to lose themselves altogether in thee!

(2) Because the soul in this practice counts as nothing whatever it thinks or does of itself; and only puts its trust, and takes its pleasure, in the dispositions of Mary, when it approaches Jesus, or even speaks to Him. Thus it practises humility far more than the souls who act of themselves, and lean, with however imperceptible a complacency, on their own dispositions. But if the soul acts more humbly it therefore glorifies God more highly; and He

is only perfectly glorified by the humble, and those that are little and lowly in heart.

(3) Because our Blessed Lady, wishing by her great charity to receive the present of our actions in her virginal hands, gives them an admirable beauty and splendor. Moreover, she offers them herself to Jesus Christ, and without difficulty; and our Lord is thus more glorified by them than if we offered them by our own criminal hands.

(4) Lastly, because you never think of Mary without Mary, in your place, thinking of God. You never praise or honor Mary without Mary praising and honoring God. Mary is altogether relative to God; and, indeed, I might well call her the relation to God. She only exists with reference to God. She is the echo of God, who says nothing, repeats nothing, but God. If you say 'Mary,' she says 'God.' St. Elizabeth praised Mary, and called her blessed, because she had believed. Mary, the faithful echo of God, at once intoned *Magnificat anima mea Dominum*, — "My soul doth magnify the Lord." That which Mary did then, she does daily now. When we praise her, love her, honor her, or give anything to her, it is God who is praised, God who is loved, God who is glorified. We give then to God by Mary and in Mary.

IV. PARTICULAR PRACTICES OF THIS DEVOTION.

1. *External Practices.*

Although what is essential in this devotion consists in the interior, we must not fail to unite to the inward practice certain external observances. *Hæc oportet facere, et illa non omittere.* We must do the one, yet not leave the other undone, both because the outward practices well performed aid the inward ones, and because they make a man remember, by reminding his senses, what he has done or ought to do; and also because they are suitable to edify our neighbor, who sees them, which inward practices cannot do. Let no worldling then or critic sneer at this. Let them not say that because true devotion is in the heart we must avoid external devotion; or that devotion ought to be hidden, and that there may be vanity in showing it. I answer with my Master, that men should see our good works, that they may glorify our Father, who is in Heaven; not, as St. Gregory says, that we ought to perform our actions and exterior devotions to please men and to get praise, — that would be vanity, — but that we should sometimes do them before men, with the view

of pleasing God, and glorifying Him thereby, without caring either for the contempt or the praise of men.

I will only allude briefly to some exterior practices, which I do not call 'exterior' because we do them without any interior, but because they have something outward about them, to distinguish them from those which are purely inward.

First Practice. Those who wish to enter into this particular devotion, which is not at present erected into a confraternity, though that were to be wished, — after having, as I said in the first part of this preparation for the reign of Jesus Christ, employed twelve days, at least, in emptying themselves of the spirit of the world, which is contrary to the spirit of Jesus Christ, — should employ three weeks in filling themselves with Jesus Christ by the holy Virgin. They should pursue the following order:

During the first week they should employ all their prayers and pious actions in asking for a knowledge of themselves, and for contrition of their sins; and they should do this in a spirit of humility. For that end they can, if they choose, meditate on what I have said before of our inward corruption. They can look

upon themselves during the six days of this week as snails, crawling things, toads, swine, serpents, and unclean animals; or they can reflect on those three considerations of St. Bernard, the vileness of our origin, the dishonors of our present state, and our ending as the food of worms. They should pray our Lord and the Holy Ghost to enlighten them; and for that end they might use the ejaculations, *Domine, ut videam*, or *Noverim me*, or *Veni Sancte Spiritus;* and they may say daily the *Ave maris stella*, and the litany of the Holy Ghost.

During the second week they should apply themselves, during all their prayers and works each day, to know the Blessed Virgin. They should ask this knowledge of the Holy Ghost; they should read and meditate what we have said about it. They should recite, as in the first week, the litany of the Holy Ghost and the *Ave maris stella*, and in addition a Rosary daily, or, if not a whole Rosary, at least a chaplet, for the intention of impetrating more knowledge of Mary.

They should apply themselves in the third week to know Jesus Christ. They can meditate upon what we have said about Him, and say the prayer of St. Augustine, which they

will find in the first part of this treatise. They can, with the same Saint, repeat a hundred times a day, *Noverim te*,—"Lord, that I might know Thee!" or, *Domine, ut videam*,—"Lord, that I might see who Thou art!" They shall recite, as in the preceding weeks, the litany of the Holy Ghost and the *Ave maris stella*, and they shall add daily the litany of the Holy Name of Jesus. At the end of the three weeks they shall confess and communicate, with the intention of giving themselves to Jesus Christ, in the quality of slaves of love, by the hands of Mary. After communion, which they should try to make according to the method given farther on, they should recite the formula of their consecration, which they will find afterwards. They ought to write it, or have it written, unless it is printed; and they should sign it the same day they have made it. It would be well also that on that day they should pay some tribute to Jesus Christ and our Blessed Lady, either as a penance for their past unfaithfulness to the vows of their Baptism, or in testimony of their dependence and allegiance to the domain of Jesus and Mary. This tribute ought to be according to the devotion and capacity of every one, as a fast, a mortification, an alms, or a candle. If they

had but a pin to give in homage, yet gave it with a good heart, it would be enough for Jesus, who looks only at the good-will. Once a year at least, on the same day, they should renew the same consecration, observing the same practices during the three weeks. They might also once a month, or even once a day, renew what they have done by these few words: *Tuus totus ego sum, et omnia mea tua sunt*,—"I am all for Thee, and all I have belongs to Thee, O my sweet Jesus, by Mary Thy holy Mother."

Second Practice. They may recite every day of their life, without however making any burden of it, the Little Corona of the Blessed Virgin, composed of three Our Fathers and twelve Hail Marys, in honor of our Lady's twelve privileges and grandeurs. This is a very ancient practice, for it has its foundation in the holy Scriptures. St. John saw a woman crowned with twelve stars, clothed with the sun, and holding the moon under her feet; and this woman, according to the interpreters, was the most holy Virgin. There are many ways of saying this Corona well, but it would be too long to enter upon them. The Holy Ghost will teach them to those who are the most faithful to this devotion. Nevertheless,

to say it quite simply we should begin by saying, *Dignare me laudare te, Virgo sacrata, da mihi virtutem contra hostes tuos.* After that we should say the Credo, and then a Pater with four Aves, and then one Gloria Patri; then another Pater, four Aves, and one Gloria Patri, and so on with the rest; and at the end we should say the *Sub tuum præsidium.*

Third Practice. It is a most glorious and praiseworthy thing, and very useful to those who have thus made themselves slaves of Jesus and Mary, that they should wear, as a badge of their loving slavery, little iron chains, blessed with the proper benediction.

It is perfectly true that these external badges are not essential, and a person who has embraced this devotion may very well go without them; nevertheless, I cannot refrain from warmly praising those who, after having shaken off the shameful chains of the slavery of the devil, in which original sin, and perhaps actual sins, had engaged them, have voluntarily surrendered themselves to the glorious slavery of Jesus Christ, and glory with St. Paul in being in chains for Jesus; chains a thousand times more glorious and precious, though of iron, than all the golden collars of emperors.

Fourth Practice. Those who undertake this

holy slavery should have a very special devotion to the great mystery of the Incarnation of the Word on the 25th of March. Indeed, the Incarnation is the proper mystery of this practice, inasmuch as it was a devotion inspired by the Holy Ghost, first, to honor and imitate the ineffable dependence which God the Son has been pleased to have on Mary, for His Father's glory and our salvation; which dependence particularly appears in this mystery, where Jesus is a captive and a slave in the bosom of the divine Mary, and depends upon her for all things; secondly, to thank God for the incomparable graces He has given Mary, and particularly for having chosen her to be His most holy Mother, which choice was made in this mystery. These are the two principal ends of the slavery of Jesus and Mary.

Have the goodness to observe that I generally say 'the slave of Jesus in Mary,' 'the slavery of Mary in Jesus.' I might, in good truth, as many have done before, say 'the slave of Mary,' 'the slavery of the holy Virgin;' but I think it is better to say 'the slave of Jesus in Mary,' as Mr. Tronson, superior general of the seminary in St. Sulpice, renowned for his rare prudence and consummate piety, counselled to an ecclesiastic who

consulted him on the subject. The following were the reasons:

1. As we are living in an age of intellectual pride, and there are all round us numbers of puffed-up scholars and conceited and critical spirits, who have plenty to say against the best established and most solid practices of piety, it is better for us not to give them any needless occasion of criticism. Hence it is better for us to say the slavery of Jesus in Mary,' and to call ourselves the slaves of Jesus Christ rather than the slaves of Mary, taking the denomination of our devotion rather from its last end, which is Jesus Christ, than from the road and the means to the end, which Mary is; though I repeat that in truth we may do either, as I have done myself. For example: a man who goes from Orleans to Tours by way of Amboise may very well say that he is going to Amboise, or that he is going to Tours; that he is a traveller to Amboise, and a traveller to Tours; with this difference, however, that Amboise is but his straight road to Tours, and that Tours only is the last end and term of his voyage.

2. A second reason is because the principal mystery we celebrate in honor of this devotion is the mystery of the Incarnation,

where we can only see Jesus in Mary, and incarnate in her bosom. Hence it is more to the purpose to speak of the slavery of Jesus in Mary, and of Jesus residing and reigning in Mary, according to that beautiful prayer of so many great men, "O Jesus, living in Mary, come and live in us, in Thy spirit of sanctity," etc.

3. Another reason is because this manner of speaking sets forth still more the intimate union which there is between Jesus and Mary. They are so intimately united that the one is altogether in the other. Jesus is altogether in Mary, and Mary is altogether in Jesus; or rather, she exists no more, but Jesus is all alone in her, and it were easier to separate the light from the sun than Mary from Jesus. So that we might call our Lord *Jesus of Mary*, and our Blessed Lady *Mary of Jesus*.

Fifth Practice. Listen to what our Lady revealed to the Blessed Alan de la Roche, as he has recorded it in his book on the dignity of the Rosary: "Know, my son, and make all others know, that it is a probable and proximate sign of eternal damnation to have an aversion, a lukewarmness, or a negligence, in saying the Angelical Salutation, which has repaired the whole world," *Scias enim et securè*

intelligas et inde latè omnibus notum facias, quod videlicet signum probabile est et propinquum æternæ damnationis horrere et acediari, ac negligere Salutationem Angelicam, totius mundi reparationem. These are words at once terrible and consoling, and which we should find it hard to believe, if we had not that holy man for a guarantee, and St. Dominic before him, and many great men since. But we have also the experience of several ages; for it has always been remarked that those who wear the outward look of reprobation, like impious heretics and proud worldlings, hate or despise the Hail Mary or the Rosary.

Heretics still learn and say the Our Father, but not the Hail Mary, nor the Rosary. That is their horror. They would rather wear a serpent than the Rosary.

The Hail Mary well said, that is, with attention, devotion, and modesty, is, according to the Saints, the enemy of the devil which puts him to flight, and the hammer which crushes him.

I pray you urgently, by the love I bear you in Jesus and Mary, not to content yourselves with saying the Little Corona of the Blessed Virgin, but a whole Chaplet; or even, if you have time, the whole Rosary every day. At

the moment of your death, you will bless the day and hour in which you have followed my advice.

Sixth Practice. To thank God for the graces He has given to our Lady, those who adopt this devotion will often say the Magnificat, as the blessed Mary d'Oignies did, and many other Saints.

Seventh Practice. Those faithful servants of Mary, who adopt this devotion, ought always greatly to despise, to hate, and to eschew the corrupted world, and to make use of those practices of the contempt of the world which we have given in the first part of this treatise.

2. *Particular and Interior Practices for those who wish to be perfect.*

Besides the external practices of the devotion which we have been describing so far, and which we must not omit through negligence or contempt, so far as the state and condition of each one will allow him to observe them, there are some very sanctifying interior practices for those whom the Holy Ghost calls to high perfection.

These may be expressed in four words: to do all our actions *by* Mary, *with* Mary, *in*

Mary, and *for* Mary; so that we may do them all the more perfectly *by* Jesus, *with* Jesus, *in* Jesus, and *for* Jesus.

I. We must do our actions *by* Mary; that is to say, we must obey her in all things, and in all things conduct ourselves by her spirit, which is the Holy Spirit of God. Those who are led by the spirit of God are the children of God, — *Qui spiritu Dei aguntur, ii sunt filii Dei.* Those who are led by the spirit of Mary are the children of Mary, and consequently the children of God, as we have shown; and among so many clients of the Blessed Virgin, none are true or faithful but those who are led by her spirit. I have said that the spirit of Mary was the Spirit of God, because she was never led by her own spirit, but always by the Holy Ghost, who has rendered Himself so completely master of her that He has become her own proper spirit. It is on this account that St. Ambrose says: *Sit in singulis Mariæ anima, ut magnificet Dominum; sit in singulis spiritus Mariæ, ut exsultet in Deo,* — "Let the soul of Mary be in each of us to magnify the Lord, and the spirit of Mary be in each of us to rejoice in God." A soul is happy indeed, when, like the good Jesuit lay brother, Alphonso Rodriguez, who

died in the odor of sanctity, it is all possessed and over-ruled by the spirit of Mary, a spirit meek and strong, zealous and prudent, humble and courageous, pure and profound. In order that the soul may let itself be led by Mary's spirit, it must first of all renounce its own spirit, and its own proper lights and wills, before it does anything. For example: it should do so before its prayer, before its saying or hearing Mass, and before communicating; because the darkness of our own spirit, and the malice of our own will and operation, if we follow them, however good they may appear to us, will put an obstacle to the spirit of Mary. Secondly, we must deliver ourselves to the spirit of Mary to be moved and influenced by it in the manner she chooses. We must put ourselves and leave ourselves in her virginal hands, like a tool in the grasp of a workman, like a lute in the hands of a skilful player. We must lose ourselves, and abandon ourselves to her, like a stone one throws into the sea. This must be done simply and in an instant, by one glance of the mind, by one little movement of the will, or even verbally, in saying, for example, I renounce myself; I give myself to thee, my dear Mother. We may not, perhaps, feel any

sensible sweetness in this act of union, but it is not on that account the less real. It is just as if we were to say with equal sincerity, though without any sensible change in ourselves, what, may it please God, we never shall say, I give myself to the devil; we should not the less truly belong to the devil because we did not *feel* we belonged to him. Thirdly, we must, from time to time, both during and after the action, renew the same act and offering of union. The more we shall do so, the more we shall be sanctified; and we shall all the sooner attain to union with Jesus Christ, which always follows necessarily on our union with Mary, because the spirit of Mary is the spirit of Jesus.

II. We must do our actions *with* Mary; that is to say, we must in all our actions regard Mary as an accomplished model of every virtue and perfection which the Holy Ghost has formed in a pure creature, for us to imitate according to our little measure. We must therefore in every action consider how Mary has done it, or how she would have done it, had she been in our place. For that end we must examine and meditate the great virtues which she practised during her life, and particularly, first of all, her lively

faith, by which she believed without hesitation the Angel's word, and believed it faithfully and constantly up to the foot of the Cross; secondly, her profound humility, which made her hide herself, hold her peace, submit to everything, and put herself the last of all; and thirdly, her altogether divine purity, which never has had, and never can have, its equal under heaven; and so on with all her other virtues. Let us remember — I repeat it for the second time — that Mary is the great and exclusive mould of God, proper to make living images of God, at small cost and in a little time; and that a soul which has found that mould, and has lost itself in it, is presently changed into Jesus Christ whom that mould represents to the life.

III. We must do our actions *in* Mary. Thoroughly to understand this practice, we must know, first, that our Blessed Lady is the true terrestrial paradise of the new Adam, and that the ancient Paradise was but a figure of her. There are, then, in this earthly paradise, riches, beauties, rarities, and inexplicable sweetnesses, which Jesus Christ, the new Adam, has left there; it was in this paradise that He took His complacence for nine months, worked His wonders, and displayed

His riches with the magnificence of a God. This most holy place is composed only of a virgin and immaculate earth, of which the new Adam was formed, and on which He was nourished, without any spot or stain, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, who dwelt there. It is in this earthly paradise that there is the true tree of life, which has borne Jesus Christ, the Fruit of life, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which has given light unto the world. There are in this divine place trees planted by the hand of God, and watered by His Divine unction, which have borne and daily bear fruits of a taste divine. There are flower-beds, enamelled with beautiful and various blossoms; virtues, shedding odors which embalm the very Angels. There are meadows green with hope, impregnable towers of strength, and the most enticing houses of confidence. It is but the Holy Ghost who can make us know the hidden truth of these figures of material things. There are in this place an air of perfect purity; a fair sun, without the shadow of the Divinity; a fair day, without the night of the Sacred Humanity; a continual burning furnace of love, where all the iron that is cast into it is changed, by excessive heat, to gold. There

is a river of humility, which springs from the earth, and which, dividing itself into four branches, waters all that enchanted place; and these are the four cardinal virtues. The Holy Ghost, by the mouth of the Fathers, also styles the Blessed Virgin the Eastern Gate, by which the High-Priest, Jesus Christ, enters the world and leaves it. By it He came the first time, and by it He will come the second.

In the next place, to comprehend thoroughly the practice of doing our actions *in* Mary, we must know that the most holy Virgin is the Sanctuary of the Divinity, the repose of the Most Holy Trinity, the throne of God, the city of God, the altar of God, the temple of God, the world of God. All these different epithets and panegyrics are most substantially true, with reference to the different marvels which the Most High has wrought in Mary. Oh, what riches! what glory! what pleasure! what happiness! to be able to enter in and dwell in Mary, where the Most High has set up the throne of His supreme glory! But how difficult it is for sinners like ourselves to have the permission, the capacity, and the light, to enter into a place so high and so holy, which is guarded not by one of the Cherubim, like

the old earthly Paradise, but by the Holy Ghost Himself, who is its absolute master! He Himself has said of it, *Hortus conclusus, soror mea sponsa, hortus conclusus, fons signatus;* Mary is shut, Mary is sealed. The miserable children of Adam and Eve, driven from the earthly Paradise, cannot enter into this one, except by a particular grace of the Holy Ghost, which they ought to merit.

After we have obtained this illustrious grace by our fidelity, we must remain in the fair interior of Mary with complacency, repose there in peace, lean our weight there in confidence, hide ourselves there with assurance, and lose ourselves there without reserve. Thus, in that virginal bosom (1) the soul shall be nourished with the milk of grace and maternal mercy; (2) it shall be delivered from its troubles, fears, and scruples; and (3) it shall be in safety, against all its enemies, — the world, the devil, and sin, — who never have an entrance there. It is on this account that Mary says that they who work in her shall not sin: *Qui operantur in me, non peccabunt;* that is to say, those who dwell in Mary's spirit shall fall into no considerable fault. Lastly (4), the soul shall be formed in Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ in it, because her bosom is, as the Holy Fathers

say, the chamber of the divine Sacraments, where Jesus Christ and all the elect have been formed.

IV. Finally, we must do all our actions *for* Mary. As we have given ourselves up entirely to her service it is but just to do everything for her, as a servant and a slave. It is not that we can take her for the last end of our services, for that is Jesus Christ alone; but we may take her for our proximate end, our mysterious means, and our easy way to go to Him. Like a good servant and slave, we must not remain idle, but, supported by her protection, we must undertake and achieve great things for this august sovereign. We must defend her privileges when they are disputed; we must stand up for her glory when it is attacked; we must entice all the world, if we can, to her service and to this true and solid devotion; we must speak and cry out against those who abuse her devotion to outrage her Son, and we must at the same time establish this Veritable Devotion; we must pretend to no recompense for our little services, except the honor of belonging to so sweet a Queen, and the happiness of being united by her to Jesus her Son by an indissoluble tie in time and in eternity.

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Glory to Jesus in Mary!
Glory to Mary in Jesus!
Glory to God Alone!

[The spirit of the above may be epitomized into the following ejaculation, which it would be well to use frequently, especially at the commencement of our most important actions: *I will do this act in thy Faith, in thy Hope, in thy Love, and for thy sublime intentions, O Mary Immaculate, in order to promote the glory of God.**]

MANNER OF PRACTISING THIS DEVOTION TO OUR LADY, WHEN WE GO TO HOLY COMMUNION.

1. *Before Communion.*

1. You must humble yourself most profoundly before God. 2. You must renounce your corrupt interior, and your dispositions, however good your own self-love may make them look. 3. You must renew your consecration by saying, *Tuus totus ego sum, et omnia mea tua sunt*,—I am all thine, my dear Mistress, with all I have. 4. You must implore that good Mother to lend you her heart, that you may receive her Son there with the same dispositions as her own. You will represent

*Publisher's note.

to her that it touches her Son's glory to be put into a heart so sullied and so inconstant as yours, which would not fail either to lessen His Glory or to destroy it. But if she will come and dwell with you, in order to receive her Son, she can do so by the dominion which she has over all hearts; and her Son will be well received by her, without stains, and without danger of being outraged or destroyed. *Deus in medio ejus, non commovebitur.* You will tell her confidently that all you have given her of your good is a little matter to honor her; but that by the Holy Communion you wish to make her the same present as the Eternal Father gave her, and that you will honor her more by that than if you gave her all the goods in the world; and, finally, that Jesus, who loves her alone, still desires to take His pleasure and His repose in her, even in your soul, though it be filthier far and poorer than the stable where He made no difficulty to come, simply because she was there. You will ask her for her heart by these tender words: *Accipio te in mea omnia, præbe mihi cor tuum, O Maria!*

2. *At Communion.*

On the point of receiving Jesus Christ, after

the Our Father, you say three times, *Domine non sum dignus.* Say the first one to the Eternal Father, telling Him you are not worthy, because of your evil thoughts and ingratitudes towards so good a Father, to receive His only Son; but that He is to behold Mary, His handmaid, — *Ecce ancilla Domini,* — who acts for us, and who gives us a singular confidence and hope with His Majesty: *Quoniam singulariter in spe constituisti me.*

You shall say to the Son, *Domine non sum dignus;* telling Him that you are not worthy to receive Him, because of your idle and evil words, and your infidelity to His service; but that nevertheless you pray Him to have pity upon you, that you may introduce Him into the house of His Own Mother, and yours, and that you will not let Him go, without His coming to lodge with her. *Tenui eum, nec dimittam donec introducam illum in domum matris meæ, et in cubiculum genitricis meæ* (Cant. iii. 4). You will pray Him to rise, and come to the place of His repose, and into the ark of His Sanctification: *Surge, Domine, in requiem tuam, tu et arca sanctificationis tuæ.* Tell Him you put no confidence at all in your own merits, your own strength, and

your own preparations, as Esau did; but that you trust only in Mary, your dear Mother, as the little Jacob did in the cares of Rebecca. Tell Him that, sinner and Esau as you are, you dare to approach His sanctity, supported and adorned, as you are, with the virtues of His holy Mother.

You shall say to the Holy Ghost, *Domine non sum dignus;* telling Him that you are not worthy to receive this masterpiece of His charity, because of the lukewarmness and iniquity of your actions, and because of your resistances to His inspirations; but that all your confidence is in Mary, His faithful Spouse. You shall say with St. Bernard, *Hæc mea maxima fiducia, hæc tota ratio spei meæ.* You can pray even Him to come Himself in Mary, His indissoluble Spouse, telling Him that her bosom is as pure, and her heart as burning as ever; and that without His descent into your soul neither Jesus nor Mary will be formed, nor yet worthily lodged.

3. *After Holy Communion.*

After Holy Communion, while you are inwardly recollected and holding your eyes shut you will introduce Jesus into the heart of Mary.

You will give Him to His Mother, who will receive Him lovingly, will place Him honorably, will adore Him profoundly, will love Him perfectly, will embrace Him closely, and will render to Him, in spirit and in truth, many homages which are unknown to us in our thick darkness. Or else you will keep yourself profoundly humbled in your heart, in the presence of Jesus residing in Mary. Or you will sit like a slave at the gate of the king's palace, where he is speaking with the queen; and while they talk one to the other without need of you, you will go in spirit to heaven and over all the earth, praying all creatures to thank, adore, and love Jesus and Mary in your place: *Venite, adoremus venite.* Or else you shall yourself ask of Jesus, in union with Mary, the coming of His kingdom on earth, through His holy Mother; or you shall sue for the Divine wisdom, or for Divine love, or for the pardon of your sins, or for some other grace; but always *by* Mary and *in* Mary, saying, while you look aside at yourself, *Ne respicias, Domine, peccata mea,* — "Lord, look not at my sins;" *Sed oculi tui videant æquitates Mariæ,*—"But let your eyes look at nothing in me but the virtues and merits of Mary:" and then, remembering your sins, you shall add,

Inimicus homo hoc fecit,—"It is I who have committed these sins;" or you shall say, *Ab homine iniquo et doloso erue me;* or else, *Te oportet crescere, me autem minui*,—"My Jesus, you must increase in my soul, and I must decrease; Mary, you must increase within me, and I must be still less than I have been." *Crescite et multiplicamini*,—"O Jesus and Mary, increase in me, and multiply yourselves outside in others also."

There are an infinity of other thoughts which the Holy Ghost furnishes, and will furnish you, if you are thoroughly interior, mortified, and faithful to this grand and sublime devotion which I have been teaching you. But always remember that the more you leave Mary to act in your Communion, the more Jesus will be glorified. The more you leave Mary to act for Jesus, and Jesus to act in Mary, the more profoundly will you humble yourself, and will listen to them in peace and silence, without putting yourself in trouble about seeing, tasting, or feeling; for the just man lives throughout on faith, and particularly in Holy Communion, which is an action of faith. *Justus meus ex fide vivit.*

[*Those desiring to become the consecrated sons and daughters of Mary, will prepare during*

*three weeks previous to some one of the great feasts of our Blessed Lady, to pronounce their act of consecration. On the feast selected, they will kneel before her altar, and devoutly say the following act:**]

CONSECRATION

OF OURSELVES TO JESUS CHRIST, THE INCARNATE WISDOM, BY THE HANDS OF MARY.

O Eternal and Incarnate Wisdom! O sweetest and most adorable Jesus! True God and True Man, only Son of the Eternal Father, and of Mary always Virgin! I adore Thee profoundly in the bosom and splendors of Thy Father during eternity; and I adore Thee also in the Virginal bosom of Mary, Thy most worthy Mother, in the time of Thine Incarnation.

I give Thee thanks for that Thou hast annihilated Thyself, in taking the form of a slave in order to rescue me from the cruel slavery of the devil. I praise and glorify Thee for that Thou hast been pleased to submit Thyself to Mary, Thy holy Mother, in all things,

* Publisher's note.

in order to make me Thy faithful slave through her. But, alas! ungrateful and faithless as I have been, I have not kept the promises which I made so solemnly to Thee in my Baptism; I have not fulfilled my obligations; I do not deserve to be called Thy son, nor yet Thy slave; and as there is nothing in me which does not merit Thine anger and Thy repulse, I dare no more come by myself before Thy Most Holy and August Majesty. It is on this account that I have recourse to the intercession of Thy most holy Mother, whom Thou hast given me for a mediatrix with Thee. It is by her means that I hope to obtain of Thee contrition, and the pardon of my sins, the acquisition and the preservation of wisdom. I salute Thee, then, O immaculate Mary, living tabernacle of the Divinity, where the Eternal Wisdom willed to be hidden, and to be adored by Angels and by men. I hail thee, O Queen of heaven and earth, to whose empire everything is subject which is under God.

I salute thee, O sure refuge of sinners, whose mercy fails to no one. Hear the desires which I have of the Divine Wisdom; and for that end receive the vows and offerings which my lowness presents to thee. I, N., a faithless sinner,—I renew and ratify

to-day in thy hands the vows of my Baptism; I renounce forever Satan, his pomps and works; and I give myself entirely to Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Wisdom, to carry my cross after Him all the days of my life, and to be more faithful to Him than I have ever been before.

In the presence of all the heavenly court I choose thee this day for my Mother and Mistress. I deliver and consecrate to thee, as thy slave, my body and soul, my goods, both interior and exterior, and even the value of all my good actions, past, present, and future; leaving to you the entire and full right of disposing of me, and all that belongs to me, without exception, according to thy good pleasure, to the greatest glory of God, in time and in eternity.

Receive, O benignant Virgin, this little offering of my slavery, in the honor of, and in union with, that subjection which the Eternal Wisdom deigned to have to thy Maternity, in homage to the power which both of you have over this little worm and miserable sinner, and in thanksgiving for the privileges with which the Holy Trinity hath favored thee. I protest that I wish henceforth, as thy true slave, to seek thy honor and to obey thee in all things

O admirable Mother, present me to thy dear Son as His eternal slave, so that as He hath redeemed me by thee, by thee He may receive me. O Mother of mercy, get me the grace to obtain the true Wisdom of God; and for that end put me in the number of those whom thou lovest, whom thou teachest, whom thou conductest, and whom thou nourishest and protectest, as thy children and thy slaves.

O faithful Virgin, make me in all things so perfect a disciple, imitator, and slave of the Incarnate Wisdom, Jesus Christ thy Son, that I may attain, by thy intercession, and by thy example, to the fulness of His age on earth, and of His glory in the heavens. *Amen.*

Qui potest capere, capiat.
Quis sapiens, et intelliget hæc?

"Who can receive this, let him receive it.
Who is wise, he will understand these things."

[Here ends the teaching of Blessed De Montfort; but a few rules are added as a guide to all who will aim at the highest perfection to which he would have his disciples aspire.*]

* Publisher's note.

RULE OF LIFE FOR THE SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF MARY.

All who with good heart, consecrate themselves to our Immaculate Mother after the form appointed by her great servant Blessed Grignon de Montfort, are entitled to be called the true sons or daughters of Mary.*

1. The Sons and Daughters of Mary shall try in all things and at all times to imitate Mary's perfect obedience to the holy will of God.

2. For Mary's sake, in order to overcome the world, they shall bear in patience and resignation all losses of whatever kind which God may send for the salvation of their souls.

3. To overcome the flesh they shall, in imitation of Jesus Christ and for His sake, suffer in silence all pains and trials of mind and body, shunning all merely human consolation except when the aid of a physician may be necessary. The consolation of the confessional is divinely appointed, and the assistance

* See act of consecration, as above.

of a wise and faithful friend will be profitable in the hour of affliction.

4. To triumph over their third and greatest enemy, the Devil, they shall endeavor to see Jesus and Mary in every human being, and have a constant solicitude for their neighbor's interests and welfare. They shall be mild, gentle and tender to every one, even as they would be to Jesus and Mary ;* performing all their actions for Jesus and Mary, that they may in very deed be their sons and daughters.†

5. They shall endeavor to say the entire Rosary (15 Mysteries) every day, or at least 5 Mysteries.

6. They shall often make use of the following ejaculations as a frequent renewal of their consecration :

I leave all to thee, my sweet mother, in the name of the Father.

I leave all to thee in the name of the Son.

I leave all to thee in the name of the Holy Ghost.

I leave all to thee in thine own sweet name, as God left all to thee in Jesus.

* "What you do to the least of Mine you do to Me."

† "He gave them power to become the sons of God." "Son, behold thy Mother."

O Mary, my sweet mother, make me worthy of the graces that flow to me from Jesus through thee.

The devout use of these ejaculations in Mary's honor is well calculated to bring us many graces — to bring us to God through her through whom God came to us.

7. They shall constantly wear the little badge of their consecration, as a mark of their fidelity to Mary. This badge is a medal of the Rosary in the shape of a heart. Those not having it can carry their Rosary day and night in honor of their Blessed Mother.

8. They shall receive the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist as often as their Director will permit.

THE END.

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